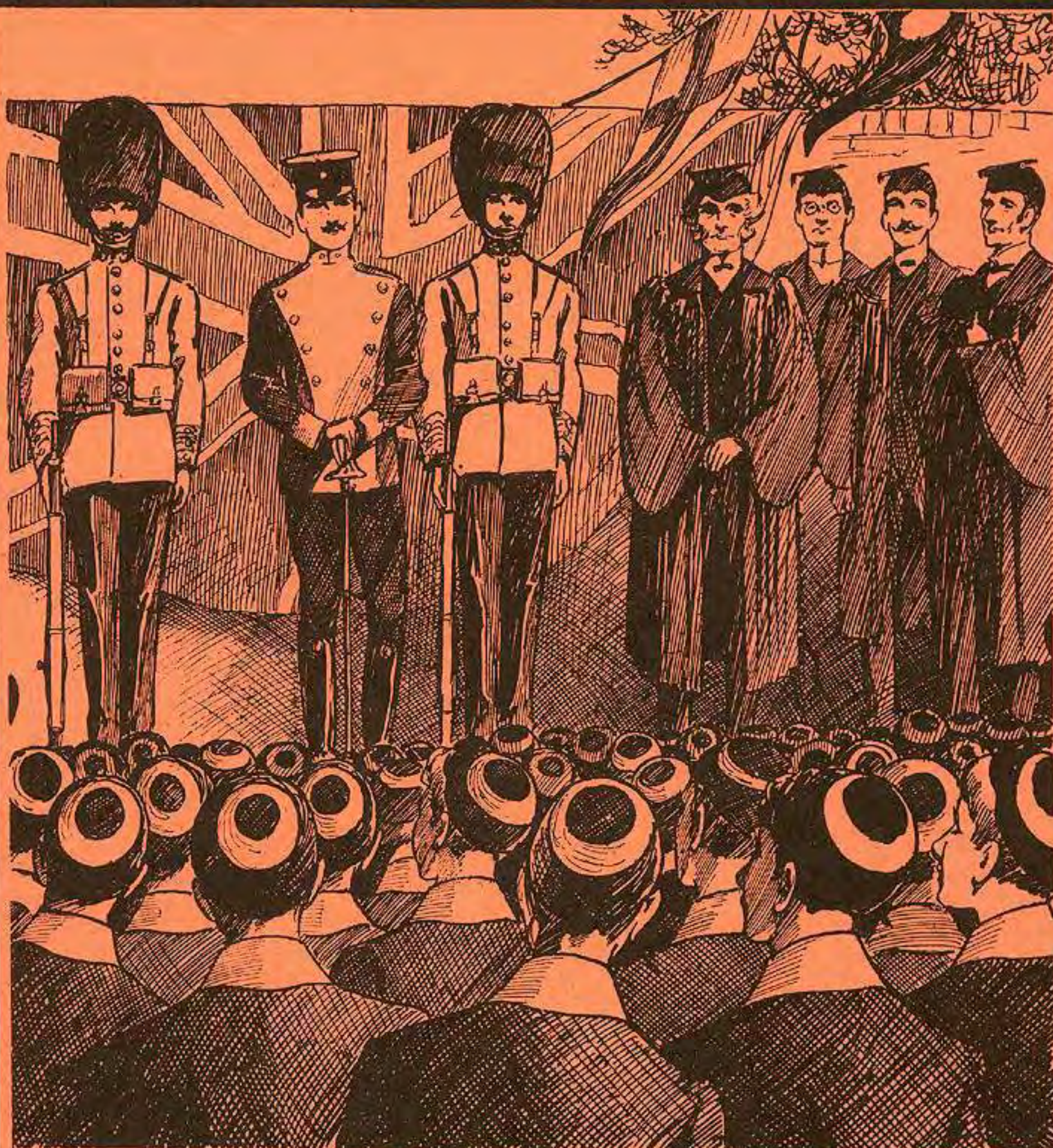


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The King's Guest.

A Splendid Long, Complete
Story of Harry Wharton & Co.
at Greyfriars School.

By

FRANK RICHARDS.



THE FIRST CHAPTER. Getting Ready.

BOB CHERRY stood before the glass in his study, with a very red face, breathing hard. Bob had just put on a nice clean collar—the stiffest and cleanest collar imaginable—and he was now negotiating the necktie. It was a very special necktie—green, with pink spots and crimson bars. It was a necktie that was certain to attract notice anywhere, and Bob was rather proud of it. His present problem was to get it to set nicely. Mark Linley, his study mate, stood watching him, with a curious expression of mingled sympathy and amusement.

As a rule, Bob Cherry did not trouble about getting his necktie straight. On ordinary occasions he seemed quite content to wear it under one ear. But it was a most important occasion this time, and Bob was dressed in his best, wearing his most uncomfortable collar, and taking extraordinary pains with his tie.

There were many things that Bob Cherry could do. He could drive a ball to the boundary in splendid style; he had a late cut that was the envy of half the Remove; he could walk almost everybody in the Form off their feet; and he could beat all but Harry Wharton and Nugent at swimming and rowing. But there were things beyond his powers—among them, getting a necktie straight, or keeping it so.

"Oh, blow!" said Bob Cherry, turning round at last from the glass and glaring at Mark Linley, who instantly composed his features. "What are you grinning at, Marky?"

"Was I grinning?" asked Mark.

"Yes, you were."

"I'm sorry!"

"How does this necktie strike you?"

Mark Linley looked at the necktie. He did not like to give his exact opinion of the colour scheme of it.

"It's a bit out of the common," he remarked, at last.

"Yes; I thought so myself," said Bob Cherry, with pardonable pride. "Only I can't get the beggar to set straight. You might give a chap a hand, instead of standing there grinning like—like a hyena!"

"Certainly, old lad!" said Linley. "What can I do?"

"It's a bit to the left, ain't it?"

"Just a bit."

"Pull it right, then."

Mark Linley gave the necktie a jerk.

Bob Cherry roared.

"You ass! I didn't say drag it round my right ear."

"Sorry!"

"Oh, you can't tie neckties! You're a fathead!"

"Thanks!" said the Lancashire lad, laughing.

Bob Cherry snorted, and turned to the glass again. He gave another tug at the necktie, and it came off. He gave another snort.

"Can't see in this rotten glass!" he growled. "It's never been the same since I biffed a cricket-ball on it. Must get this thing to look decent—girls always notice a chap's necktie!"

"Do they?" said Mark.

"Of course they do!" said Bob crossly. "Most important thing. If a chap's necktie is all right, he looks all right. It's very important."

"I hadn't thought very much about it," said Mark, smiling. "But I dare say you're right, Bob. Let me help you—"

"Oh, you can't tie ties for toffee! If some chap with some sense would come in—"

"I say, you fellows—"

A fat face, adorned with a large pair of spectacles, was projecting into the study. Bob Cherry turned round and glared at Billy Bunter.

"Get out!" he snapped.

"Oh, really—"

"Get out! Don't bother! Buzz off! Can't you see I'm busy?" roared Bob.

"I'll help you if you like," said Bunter. "I'm rather a dab at tying neckties."

Bob Cherry hesitated.

"Well, you can have a try if you like," he said. "Mind your fingers ain't sticky. That's a new necktie, and I don't want to have the thing spoiled."

"You leave it to me," said Bunter confidently.

And he rolled into the study.

"You'll have to bend down," he said. "I can't reach your neck, you blessed lamp-post! Let me get at it, and I'll have it done in a jiffy!"

Bob Cherry grunted, and bent down. Billy Bunter started work on the tie. There was a smear of jam on Bunter's fat face, telling of a late visit to the tuckshop. As a matter of fact, his fat hands were jammy, too—very jammy. When Bunter ate jam tarts, he generally contrived to take a great deal of the jam externally.

"Buck up!" growled Bob. "I'm getting cramped!"

"All serene. You wait a minute."

Bunter's jammy fingers went to work. Bob Cherry was wearing a white waistcoat—a thing that was quite against the rules at Greyfriars for a junior to wear. But, as we have said, it was a most important occasion. If Bunter had been a criminal, and the gentlemen from Scotland Yard had wished to track him down, they could have done so quite easily from the finger-prints he left upon Bob Cherry's white waistcoat. Bob, who had his chin turned up at a most uncomfortable angle, did not observe the damage that the fat junior was doing.

"These things are quite easy to any chap with an artistic eye," said Bunter. "I'm rather a dab at art, myself. There, that's ripping!"

"Is it straight?"

"Straight as a die. The only thing is to keep it so. Have you a tie-pin?"

"Yes; here you are. Mind you don't run it into me."

"Oh, that's all right!"

Bunter shoved in the tie-pin with his fat thumb. Through tie and shirt underneath it went, and there was a terrific yell from Bob Cherry.

He jumped clear of the floor, and the fat junior staggered backwards.

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"Oh!" roared Bob. "Oh! You—you murderous villain! Oh!"

"Oh, really—"

"Yow! You've driven about an inch of it into my neck! Yoon!"

"I'm sincerely sorry—"

"Oh, you fathead!" groaned Bob. "Yow!"

"Let me have another try."

"Keep off, you dangerous chump!" roared Bob, and Bunter jumped away in alarm. "If you come near me again I'll squash you!"

"Oh, really—"

"I'll manage it myself, you dangerous fathead!"

Bob Cherry turned to the glass. The little mirror had certainly suffered from the impact of a cricket-ball in its very centre; but by twisting one's neck, one could obtain a partial view of one's face in it—somewhat distorted, it is true.

There was enough of the mirror to show Bob Cherry the damage Billy Bunter had done to his white waistcoat.

Bob gave a roar.

"You—you—you jammy beast!"

"Oh, really, Cherry—"

"You—you—you unspeakable toad!" shrieked Bob.

"I've had this white waistcoat got up specially, and now—oh—"

Words failed Bob.

He made a wild rush at the fat junior, and seized him by the shoulders, and whirled him round. Bunter struggled and yelled.

"Yow! Leggo! Yah! Oh! Help! Groo!"

Bob Cherry whirled him through the doorway.

"There!" he gasped.

He sent Bunter spinning into the passage just as Harry Wharton and Frank Nugent came along. Wharton and Nugent were dressed very nicely, with beautifully clean collars and nicely brushed hair. The fat junior went crashing into them, and there was a simultaneous yell from Wharton and Nugent.

"Oh!"

"Yaroo!"

And they rolled over on the linoleum, and Bunter rolled over them. Bob Cherry stared at the scene of disaster for a moment, and then burst into a roar of laughter.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

THE SECOND CHAPTER.

Buck Up!

HARRY WHARTON jumped to his feet.

"You ass!" he shouted. "What's the little game?"

"What are you up to?"

"Sorry!" grinned Bob. "Ha, ha! I'm awfully sorry! Ha, ha! I was only slinging Bunter out!"

"Ow!" groaned Bunter. "I'm dead—I mean, I'm fearfully injured! Ow!"

Wharton and Nugent snorted with wrath. They were got up beautifully for the important occasion that afternoon, and the roll on the passage linoleum had made them dishevelled and dusty.

"You—you—you champion ass!" howled Wharton.

"Sorry! Ha, ha!"

"Bump him!" roared Nugent.

"Hold on! I— Oh! Yah! Oh!"

The two wrathful juniors rushed straight at Bob Cherry. They collared him, and whirled him back into the study, and bumped him upon the carpet, almost before he knew what was happening.

Bump—bump!

"Yaroo!"

Billy Bunter blinked in at the doorway.

"Serve you jolly well right!" he yelled. "I—"

"Now bump Bunter!" gasped Nugent.

"Oh!"

They turned upon Bunter. But the fat junior was scudding down the passage. Bob Cherry sat up on the carpet. His hair was untidy, and his collar had burst from its stud, and his waistcoat was dusty, and his jacket was split up the back. He sat and gasped for breath, and glared at the avengers.

"You—you—you unspeakable dummies!" he stuttered.

"Tit for tat!" grinned Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry staggered to his feet. He made a wild clutch at a cricket-stump. Mark Linley caught him by the arm.

"Hold on, Bob!" he exclaimed. "It's jolly near time to meet Marjorie and Clara!"

"I'll pulverise them!"

"Cheese it!"

"I tell you—"

Fisher T. Fish, the American junior, came along the



Crash! The terrific impact of the yacht upon the hidden rock could be heard from where the juniors stood, and in an instant the handsome vessel reeled, tottered and trembled, and ground back from the rock. (See page 5.)

passage. Fisher T. Fish was arrayed in wonderful colours, with bows on his shoes, and a decided waist to his lounge jacket. Fisher T. Fish prided himself on dressing in the latest Broadway style—a style which he fondly imagined to be far ahead of anything that Piccadilly or Bond Street could show.

"I guess it's about time we shifted!" said Fisher T. Fish, looking in. "My hat! What are you fellows up to? Going to meet the girls in that style?"

"These silly asses have—"

"That silly chump has—"

"Those duffers—"

"That fathhead—"

"I guess you'd better get yourselves tidy, and come!" said Fish. "We're waiting for you. Johnny Bull's at the end of the passage, with Hazel and Tommy Brown. How long are you going to keep us waiting?"

"That chump—"

"Those idiots—"

"You'll get left if you don't hustle up!" said Fish, and he swung away down the passage, whistling "Yankee Doodle" with a shrill whistle that made fellows put their fingers to their ears.

Harry Wharton laughed.

"Pax!" he exclaimed. Look here, we came to call for you, Bob—"

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"You ass!"

"You've mucked up our things, and we shall have to clean up!"

"Look at my jacket!"

"Look at my bags, if you come to that!"

"Oh, blow your bags!"

"Blow your jacket, then!"

"You ass!"

"You chump!"

"Oh, ring off!" exclaimed Mark Linley. "I suppose you don't want to keep Marjorie and Clara waiting while you slang one another, do you?"

"By Jove, no! Better change your jacket, Bobby, and come on!"

"Oh, get out!" growled Bob Cherry.

Wharton and Nugent returned to Study No. 1 to brush one another down. Bob Cherry changed into another jacket, put on another collar, and recommenced the struggle with his necktie.

A group of juniors waited at the end of the Remove passage for him. It was a half-holiday at Greyfriars, and a blazing June afternoon. The weather was perfect for anything in the open air. It was Coronation week, and the juniors of Greyfriars—Harry Wharton & Co., at all events—wanted to celebrate the Coronation. A picnic was the best wheeze they could think of; but it was to be an extra

special picnic. Marjorie Hazeldene and Clara Trevelyn, of Cliff House, were coming, and the juniors, in consequence, had taken extra pains with their outfit, and, in fact, were all looking as neat and clean as new pins.

Hence Bob Cherry's desperate endeavours with the necktie.

"Bob!"

"Bobby!"

"Bob!"

The juniors waited at the end of the passage at the head of the staircase, and shouted for Bob Cherry to fill in the time. The fact that their shouting would further fluster the unhappy Bob, and frustrate his attempts to get his necktie quite to set, perhaps added to the zest with which they shouted.

"Bob! Bob!"

"Are you coming, Bob?"

"Buck up, Bob!"

"Never mind the tie!"

"Come in your shirt-sleeves, old man."

"Get a move on!"

"Bob! Bob! Bob!"

Bob Cherry put a flaming face out of his study door, and glared along the passage. He was gradually being worked up to a state of frenzy.

"Shut up!" he roared.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Bob! Bob! Bob!" trilled Nugent, as if he were calling a dog. "Come on, Bob, Bob!"

"You fathead!"

"We're waiting."

"Wait, then, you silly asses!"

"Come on!"

"I guess it's time to hustle. You'll get left."

"Buck up!"

"Oh, go and eat coke!" snorted Bob Cherry. And he retired into the study again.

"Bob! Bob! Come on, Bobby!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Bob Cherry issued from the study at last with a red and perspiring face. Mark Linley came with him, trying not to smile. They joined the group of juniors. Bob was glaring as if he could hardly keep from hitting out at random.

"Ready?" asked Nugent, with a sweet smile.

"Yes, idiot!"

"Quite sure you don't want to change your necktie?"

Nugent dodged back just in time as he asked the question, and the drive intended for his nose caught John Bull on the ear. Bull gave a roar.

"Ow! What's that for?"

"Sorry. I meant it for Nugent!"

"You ass!"

"Well, you shouldn't get in the way."

"Look here——"

"Oh, cheese it!"

"I'll——"

"Order!" exclaimed Harry Wharton. "We shall be late for Marjorie if we don't buck up. Don't spoil the Coronation picnic by rowing."

And John Bull and Bob Cherry snorted at one another, and the party went downstairs.

THE THIRD CHAPTER.

The Coronation Picnic.

BILLY BUNTER was waiting on the steps of the School House. There was a most ingratiating smile upon Billy Bunter's face. Bunter had got wind of the picnic; and Bunter was never to be left out of an affair of that sort, if Bunter could help it. He blinked at the juniors through his big spectacles.

"You fellows ready?" he asked. "I've been waiting for you quite a long time."

They stared at him.

"I'm sure it's very kind of you," said Wharton. "You can go on waiting."

"Oh, really, Wharton! I'm coming, you know," said Bunter.

"Rats!"

"Now, look here, you know how disappointed Marjorie will be if I don't come," said Bunter, in a tone of expostulation. "It's a shame to spoil her afternoon, just because of your personal jealousy. I—— Ow!"

Hazeldene caught the fat junior by the back of the collar, and shook him till his teeth clicked like castanets.

"You-fat toad!" he exclaimed wrathfully.

"Ow! Ow! Leggo! I—I didn't mean Marjorie, Hazel. I—I was really speaking of Clara!" gasped Bunter. "I mean that Clara would miss me!"

"Well, I'm not going to miss you!" said Hazeldene.

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He swung the fat junior round, and took good aim with his boot. He did not miss Bunter. The Owl of the Remove gave a roar as the kick landed, and rolled off the steps. The pionickers left him sitting on the ground, blinking after them, as they walked down to the gates.

"Ow!" gasped Bunter. "Beasts!"

Harry Wharton & Co. turned out of the gates in high spirits. Bob Cherry was beginning to recover his equanimity. Tom Brown had assured him that the necktie looked ripping, and that was like balm to Bob Cherry's anxious bosom.

It was a glorious June afternoon. The sides of the Black Pike were a sea of green as the juniors tramped down the leafy lane towards Cliff House. Most of them had bags or baskets to carry, well-laden. It was to be a picnic of picnics. Two graceful figures came in sight in the lane under the old trees at the gates of Cliff House. The juniors halted, and raised their straw-hats to Miss Marjorie and Miss Clara.

"So sorry," said Harry Wharton at once. "We should have been ten minutes early, only——"

"Only Bob was delayed," said Nugent.

Bob glared at him.

"I wasn't exactly delayed," he said. "I—I was——"

"Tied," said Nugent.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Oh, you fathead!" murmured Bob. "Won't I punch your head presently?"

"What did you say, Bob?"

"N-nothing."

"It doesn't matter at all," said Marjorie brightly. "You are only a few minutes late, and it is of no consequence."

"Certainly not," said Miss Clara, with a sweet smile. "Besides, boys never can be punctual. Can they, Marjorie?"

"Oh, rats!" said John Bull warmly. "I—I mean—I mean I don't quite agree to that, you know."

"Come on, Marjorie," said Hazeldene. "You can carry this bag if you like."

"Oh, bosh!" said Bob Cherry. "I'll carry it."

"You're carrying a basket already."

"Well, I've got two hands," said Bob. "I can carry two things, can't I? Give it to me."

"I'll carry it," said Marjorie.

Bob shook his head.

"You can't," he said. "It's heavy."

Marjorie laughed. As a matter of fact, she was a strong and healthy girl, and quite as well able to carry the bag as Bob himself was. But Bob's firm conviction was that Marjorie was as delicate as a piece of porcelain, and must be treated with as much care.

He manfully caught up both bags, Hazeldene grinning the while. Hazeldene happened to be Marjorie's brother, and perhaps that was the reason why he didn't see why she shouldn't carry a bag.

"This way!" said Wharton.

They tramped on down to the sands. The picnic was to be held under the slopes of the Shoulder, the great rock that shut in Pegg Bay to the north. There, with the great bluff behind them, and the North Sea rolling before them, gleaming in the summer sun, was an ideal spot. The party picked their way carefully over the rough rocky paths, tramping over sand and shingle. A breeze blew from the sea, and the girls held their hats. Bob Cherry, with a burden in each hand, could not put a hand to his straw-hat, and he had no guard upon it. He was in uneasiness every moment that the wind would lift it from his head and whirl it away over the rocks, and each time a gust came his way, he screwed up his forehead in the most alarming way to keep his hat tight. Miss Clara uttered a little cry of affright as she looked at him.

"Good gracious! Are you ill, Bob?"

Bob was making a most horrible grimace. He coloured like a beetroot.

"N-no!" he stammered.

"You haven't the tooth-ache?" asked Miss Clara, with much solicitude.

"N-n-no!"

"Oh!"

Puff-puff! Bob's straw-hat was lifted from his head, and sailed away on the winds of the winds high among the rocks. Bob uttered an exclamation, and the bags dropped from his hands as he made a wild clutch after his hat.

Crash!

There was an ominous sound of breakages in one of the bags. Nugent gave a roar.

"Oh, you ass! That's the crockery in that bag!"

"My hat!"

"Oh, blow your hat!"

"It's being blown!" grinned Hazeldene. "Ha, ha, ha!" The straw-hat sailed into a crevice high up the cliff, and lodged there. Bob Cherry picked up the bags.

There was a curious rattle inside the one that contained

the crockery. Bob Cherry shook it, and listened to the sound, and looked dismayed.

"I'm afraid some of the things are broken," he remarked.

"I shouldn't wonder if they are all!" grunted Nugent.

"Of all the asses——"

"Look here——"

"Of all the chumps——"

"Never mind," said Marjorie, in her soft voice. "We can take it in turns with the tea-cups, you know. That will be fun."

"Of course it will," said Harry Wharton. "Never mind the giddy crockery."

And the juniors tramped on to the place chosen for the picnic, and the bags were deposited there and unpacked.

THE FOURTH CHAPTER.

The Wreck in Pegg Bay.

BOB CHERRY unpacked the crockery with a very red face. The fall of the bag upon the hard rock had wrought havoc with it. Half the cups and saucers were broken. The tea-pot, fortunately, was a metal one, and not easily broken, or Bob Cherry would certainly have accounted for that, too. The unbroken crocks were extracted, and John Bull lighted the spirit stove, and the kettle was filled from the can of water brought for the purpose.

"Kettle's all right," said Nugent. "Bob wasn't carrying that."

"Oh, rats!" said Bob.

"Lucky he wasn't carrying the methylated spirit, too," Tom Brown remarked.

"I guess so."

"Or the eggs!" said Hazeldene.

"My hat! Yes."

Bob Cherry was crimson.

"Oh, do give a fellow a rest!" he exclaimed. "I couldn't help dropping the blessed bag."

"Of course you couldn't," said Marjorie; "and it was very kind of you to carry two bags instead of one. It was all Hazel's fault."

"Oh, I like that!" exclaimed Hazeldene. "What rot!"

Bob Cherry very nearly punched Hazeldene's head for daring to characterise any of Marjorie's opinions as "rot." He remembered just in time that Hazel was Marjorie's brother, and that, in consequence, Marjorie probably wouldn't approve of the punching.

Marjorie was very kind to Bob, and as Marjorie was really the only person there for whose opinion Bob cared two straws, he was soon put at his ease. If Marjorie regarded him with an approving eye, all was evidently all right. That was the way Bob Cherry looked at it. As a matter of fact, Marjorie was much kinder to him than usual, and Bob Cherry began to think that a Coronation picnic was the best idea that had ever been thought of in the history of the Greyfriars Remove.

"Shall we poach the eggs first, or make the tea?" asked Nugent. "There's only one stove."

"Eggs first," said Marjorie. "The tea would have to stand too long."

"Eggs first, of course," said Bob Cherry. "You must be an ass, Nugent!"

Nugent snorted.

The eggs were poached, with a loud sizzling of butter and a very appetising scent. Then the tea was made, and Marjorie cut the bread-and-butter, and the cloth was spread on a flat rock and the picnic commenced. The juniors sat on the rocks or on the sand at their ease, and the feast proceeded right merrily.

Harry Wharton glanced out to sea several times as the tea proceeded. The other fellows followed his glance. A trim vessel was coming into Pegg Bay from the south—a handsome steam yacht—leaving a trail of black smoke against the summer sky. Wharton's brows wrinkled as he watched the yacht come on.

"If those chaps don't take care, they'll be on the Shark's Back!" he exclaimed.

The Shark's Back was a sunken rock out in the bay, well known to the fishermen of Pegg, but completely hidden from view by the curling blue waters. Many a holiday-maker from the town, boating in Pegg Bay, had come to grief on that rock, which gave no sign of its presence in calm weather, though, when the sea was rough, lines of foam marked where the water broke upon it.

The strange yacht was coming straight on for the bay, and heading directly for the Shark's Back.

"They couldn't be such blessed idiots as to run on the rock, I should think," said Nugent. "They can't be coming into the bay without somebody who knows the place. It's dangerous here without a pilot."

"It's a foreign craft," said John Bull; "it's not English-built, anyway."

Wharton rose to his feet.

"It jolly well looks to me as if they're running straight on the Shark's Back," he said. "Somebody ought to warn them."

THE MAGNET LIBRARY.—No. 175.

NEXT TUESDAY: **"BULSTRODE ON THE WARPATH."** A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. **By FRANK RICHARDS.**

EVERY
TUESDAY.

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ONE
PENNY.

The juniors rose to their feet and looked at the oncoming yacht. They could see moving figures on her deck. The vessel came straight on, the smoke rolling out blacker and blacker behind.

Nugent uttered a sudden exclamation, and his hand rose to point.

"My hat! Look!"

"Great Scott!"

Beyond the yacht another vessel, a larger craft, was steaming on, with thick smoke pouring from her funnels. It was perfectly clear that she was following the yacht, and gaining upon her fast. The juniors looked on in amazement. There was no doubt that the big steamer was chasing the yacht, though for what reason the Greyfriars fellows could not imagine.

"It's a chase," said John Bull.

"What can it mean?"

They had forgotten the picnic now. Marjorie and Clara watched the yacht as keenly as the juniors. The boys scrambled up on the rocks to get a better view.

The yacht was coming on at full speed, but her speed was nothing to that of the pursuer. The latter was gaining very fast, and drawing closer and closer into view. It seemed like a scene from a dream to the boys as they watched. For what purpose could the big black steamer be pursuing the yacht?

"She'd run her down in the open sea inside half an hour," said Harry Wharton, in a low voice.

"And that's why they're coming into the bay," said Nugent.

"That's it."

"And they know nothing about the rock yonder——"

"They're lost!"

The picnickers on the rocks watched as if fascinated. The yacht was rushing on directly to her doom. Through the clear air, in the sea-breeze, the throb of her engines came plainly to the ears of the juniors. Marjorie touched Wharton on the arm. Her face was pale.

"Cannot we warn them somehow?" she exclaimed.

"I'll try," said Harry.

He snatched up the tablecloth and mounted upon a high rock and waved it above his head. There was a movement perceptible on the deck of the yacht, but the crew evidently did not understand the warning, for she steamed right on without deviating in the least from her course.

"They don't catch on!" muttered Bob Cherry.

Nugent made a hopeless gesture.

"They may think Wharton's trying to guide them to a safe anchorage," he said.

"Quite possible."

Wharton waved the white cloth, and a handkerchief was waved back from the yacht by a young fair-haired man in a tightly-fitting uniform, evidently a foreign military uniform of some sort.

But the yacht came right on.

Wharton came scrambling down from the rock. His face was pale now.

"They can't understand," he said. "They may not dare to stop, either—that black steamer means mischief of some sort to them."

"Yes, rather!"

"It's awful," said John Bull, with a shudder. "They'll be on the rocks in less than a minute now, and we can do nothing."

Wharton kicked off his boots. He did not speak, but his intention was evident. Marjorie uttered a cry.

"Harry, you can't go!"

He nodded.

"I'm going to try to help them, Marjorie."

"But the currents! You know how treacherous they are!"

"I've swum through them once," said Harry quietly. "I can try it a second time. We can't stand here idle and see them drown."

"Oh!" The girl shuddered. "It is terrible!"

"I shall go, too," said Bob Cherry.

"Hold on!" said Harry. "If they have time to get a boat out they won't need us. But if they're left in the water——"

"Look!"

"Good heavens!"

"She's struck!"

Crash!

The terrific impact of the yacht upon the hidden rocks could be heard from where the juniors stood.

The handsome vessel reeled and tottered and trembled, and ground back from the rock, and in an instant her bows slid under the water. A huge gap must have been torn in the hull by the cruel teeth of the rocks, and the vessel filled instantly.

There was a wild shout from the crew, ringing across the waves.

In a few seconds, as it seemed, the foreign yacht was rolled on her beam-ends in the curling waves, and the crew were struggling in the water.

THE FIFTH CHAPTER.

The Rescue of the Prince.

HARRY WHARTON ran down to the water's edge. The worst had happened. With fearful suddenness the yacht had gone to her doom, as many a vessel had gone before her upon the cruel rocks of the Shark's Back. In the clear, bright sunlight of the June afternoon the spectators on the shore could see everything that passed—the crashing of the wrecked yacht on the reef as it rolled in the water, the struggles of the seamen in the waves.

Most of them were clinging to lifebelts or spars, and some were striking out for the distant shore, where the village of Pegg nestled at the foot of the great cliffs.

Harry Wharton did not hesitate. He plunged into the water, and with swift and steady strokes swam out towards the scene of the wreck.

Boats were putting off from Pegg, where the disaster had been seen. From seaward the big black steamer was coming on fast, leaving thick and thicker black smoke from her funnels trailing against the blue, sunny sky.

"I'm going after Wharton," said Bob Cherry. "You chaps had better stay here. Only a jolly good swimmer is any good in the currents out there."

"I think I shall come," said Mark.

"And I," said John Bull.

"And I," said Nugent.

"I guess I'll watch you," said Fisher T. Fish. "Over there I'm quite at home in the Hudson, but I guess these waters are strange to me."

Tom Brown followed the other fellows into the water. Hazeldene made a motion to do the same, perhaps not because he wanted to, but because he did not care to hang back. But Marjorie caught him by the sleeve.

"You can't go, Hazel. You are not good swimmer enough."

And Hazeldene stayed with Fisher T. Fish. The American explained to Miss Marjorie and Miss Clara that if it had been on the shore of Long Island, for instance, he would have shown them what swimming was really like. But the girls were not listening. They were watching the swimmers with their hearts in their mouths.

Harry Wharton was cleaving the water with swift and steady strokes. Many a time he had swum in the bay in fine weather, and he knew the Shark's Back from end to end. The yacht's crew were struggling in the water, some of them swimming towards the shore, others clinging to pieces of wreckage. The fair-haired young man in uniform whom Harry had seen on the yacht was swimming feebly. Either he was hurt or he was a very poor swimmer, and Harry could see that he was holding his own with great difficulty, and was in danger of going under every moment. Wharton made herculean efforts to reach him before he should sink.

The young man saw him coming, and shouted out something in German.

"Buck up!" yelled back Wharton. "I'm coming!"

A fat man was clinging to a spar floating near the young man. He waved one fat hand frantically to the swimming juniors.

"Der Kronprinz," he shouted—"der Kronprinz!"

It appeared to be for the fair-haired young man that he felt anxiety, but he did not leave the spar to go to his assistance. Perhaps he could not swim. But he waved a fat hand, and shouted in a frenzied way:

"Der Kronprinz!"

Wharton was swimming desperately to reach the young man. The latter had been under once, and his struggles were growing very feeble. He disappeared under the water again just as Wharton came up with him.

Wharton grasped the thick, fair hair firmly, and brought the handsome face above the water. The young man was deadly pale, and his eyes were closed. They opened feebly, and a wild stare greeted Wharton.

The young man struggled again. He was not quite spent yet. Wharton changed his grasp from the hair to the thick, braided collar.

"I've got you!" he exclaimed. "It's all right. Don't struggle."

"Mein Gott!"

The fat man raised himself upon the spar and waved his hands. His spectacles had fallen off, and his eyes were

blinking with sea-water. He sputtered out inarticulate cries for help in throaty German.

"Der prinz!" he gurgled. "Der Kronprinz ist in dem wasser—der prinz ist in dem wasser gefallen!"

"I've got him!" shouted back Wharton.

The fat gentleman did not seem to hear.

"Der prinz! Der Kronprinz!" he bellowed.

"I've got him!"

"Er ist in dem wasser—"

"He's all right!"

"Help!" roared the fat man, it suddenly coming into his mind that English was the language to use under the circumstances. "Help! The Crown Prince is in the water! Help!"

"I tell you I've got him!" yelled Wharton.

The prince gasped and sputtered out sea-water.

"I am safe, baron!" he exclaimed.

"Der Kronprinz—oh!"

The spar floated away under the fat gentleman, and he collapsed into the water. Fortunately for him, by that time the other juniors were on the spot. John Bull and Frank Nugent caught hold of him, and supported him, blowing and puffing and spluttering.

"We've got you, eir," said Nugent cheerfully.

"Ach! Mein Gott!"

"You're all right."

"Mein Gott!"

"Lend a hand here, Bob!" Wharton exclaimed.

"Right-ho!" said Bob Cherry.

Bob supported the prince on the other side. There seemed to be no doubt that the young man was a prince—a foreign prince, of course. The juniors were a little elated at the idea of rescuing a prince.

"Ich danke ihnen," gasped the young man. "I thank you, my young friends. You have saved my life."

"We'll hold you till we get help, sir," said Wharton cheerily. "That big steamer will be close in in a few minutes—"

The young man uttered an exclamation of alarm.

"Help me ashore, quick!" he exclaimed.

"But—"

"They are my enemies!" the young man said breathlessly. "They are following me to kidnap me. I am Prince Otto of Kaltebad, and they are Anarchists."

"Great Scott!"

A boat had dropped from the side of the black steamer. The fate of the yacht had warned her crew not to approach too near the rocks. The boat was pulling for the scene of the wreck, and a man with black moustaches and a black beard and a large pair of spectacles was standing up in the boat and pointing to the prince.

THE SIXTH CHAPTER

My Friend the Prince.

HARRY WHARTON looked towards the boat. "It's all right," he said quietly. "We can scramble over the Shark's Back, and a boat can never follow us."

The prince gasped.

"Good—good! Hurry!" he cried.

"This way. Hold on to us."

Wharton and Bob Cherry swam on either side of the prince, supporting him; and they swam the shallow water over the sunken rock, their feet clinking on it as they passed over. The man in glasses, standing up in the boat, waved his hand and shouted furiously in German, of which the juniors did not understand a word. They could guess the import of his remarks. He was ordering them to stop, but they took no heed of him.

On the further side of the Shark's Back they were safe from the boat. It could not follow without going aground.

"Ah! Many thanks, my friends!" the prince panted.

"They would have stopped me from appearing at the Coronation of your King, but we have escaped them now."

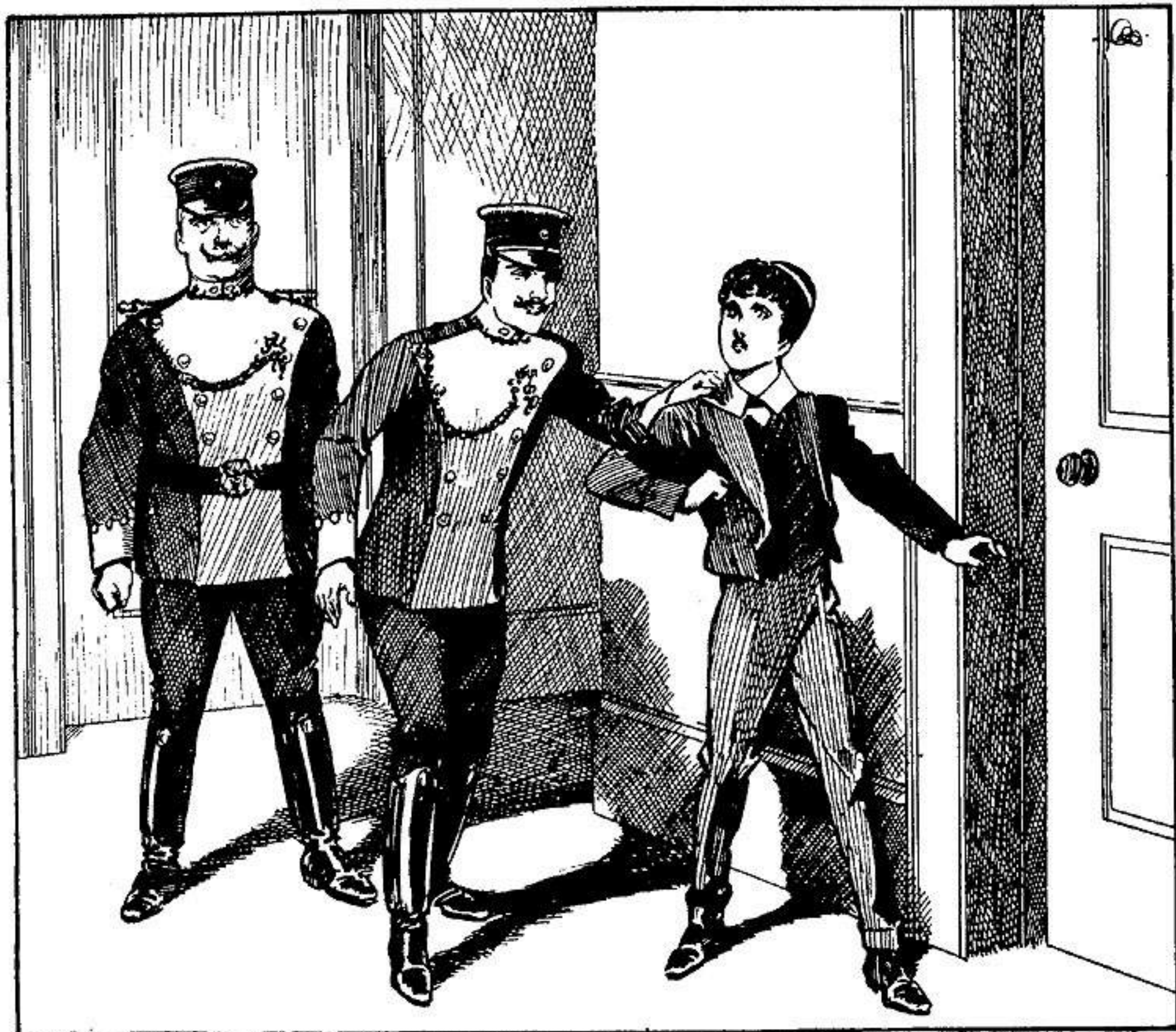
"By Jove!" said Harry.

He understood now that it was one of the King's guests for the Coronation festivities who had been wrecked.

"My word!" murmured Bob Cherry. "What a sensation this will make at Greyfriars!"

They swam on, the prince between them. He swam a little himself, but his tight uniform incommoded his movements. The boat from the black steamer came on behind, and there was a loud crunching as her keel grated on the rock. The crew backed instantly, and the boat glided off.

The black-moustached man in glasses shook his clenched fist at the juniors as the boat pulled back towards the steamer. It was, indeed, high time for the Anarchists to be gone, for the boats from Pegg were now arriving on the



As Harry Wharton went down the passage, he received a slap on the shoulder from somebody who came strolling out of the side door, and he swung round with an exclamation. "You fathead! Oh!" It was the prince. (See page 9.)

scene, and the shipwrecked crew were being picked up. Wharton and Bob reached the shingle at last, and Hazel and Fish helped them ashore.

They dragged the gasping prince out of the water.

Prince Otto stood up on the sand, drenched and dripping, and looked back towards the steamer. It was already steaming away.

"Ach, my friends, I have beaten you, then!" the prince exclaimed.

"Beaten hollow, sir!" said Bob Cherry.

"Thanks to you, my lads," said Prince Otto, shaking hands with them one after the other. "Thanks to you."

"Jolly glad to help you, sir," said Harry cheerfully. "We don't have a chance of fishing out a prince every day."

Prince Otto of Kaltebad laughed.

Then he perceived the two girls, and he saluted them with great respect. He did not look more than twenty-three or twenty-four, and seemed quite a boy himself.

"It is a great pleasure, as well as a great service, that you render me!" he exclaimed. "It is so great delight to see the British misses."

Marjorie and Clara smiled.

"We are very glad you are saved, sir," said Marjorie.

"What-ho!" said Miss Clara.

The last remark appeared to puzzle the prince a little. His English vocabulary did not include "What-ho!"

By this time Nugent and John Bull were pulling the fat gentleman ashore. The other juniors followed, lending a helping hand. The crew were picked up by the Pegg fishermen, but the fat gentleman was as much as the Greyfriars

juniors could manage. He was very fat and very heavy, and very flustered, and very tightly uniformed.

He rolled out on the shingle, and they dragged him up, and he stood gasping and dripping and spluttering.

"Mein prinzi!" he moaned. "Mein prinzi ist in dem wasser!"

Bob Cherry gave the fat gentleman a slap on the shoulder. "It's all right," he bawled. "The prince is here."

"Ach!"

"Here is the prince."

"Ach Himmel!"

The prince waved his hand.

"I am safe, baron," he exclaimed. "Thanks to these young gentlemen, I am safe."

"Ach! Mein Gott! Mein prinzi—mein prinzi! Mein Gott!"

The baron fell upon his knees in the sand, and kissed the prince's hand. The juniors tried not to smile. It was really a most impressive scene, and both the Germans took it very seriously, but to the juniors it seemed irresistibly like comic opera. As a matter of fact, in German courts and in German military circles there is a great deal of unconscious comic opera.

"Mein prinzi!"

"Rise, baron!"

The fat baron tottered to his feet. He was weeping with relief at finding his beloved Kronprinz quite safe and sound.

"Baron Roten Augen, my chamberlain," said the prince, with a wave of the hand, presenting the fat gentleman to the Greyfriars juniors.

Harry Wharton & Co. bowed to the ground, standing in a circle round the wet and flabby baron.

Baron Rotenagen bowed in return, and the juniors, not to be outdone, bowed back; and then the baron bowed again, till his wet, shiny bald head almost touched the ground.

Harry Wharton & Co. bent themselves double in a further bow, and Bob Cherry actually succeeded in tapping the sand with his head.

Marjorie and Clara tried not to laugh. Miss Clara was taken with a fit of sneezing, and Marjorie seemed to have a pain in the throat.

The prince looked out to sea.

The black steamer was still in sight, feeling her way, as it were, along the coast, and evidently seeking a safe place to run in shore. The Anarchists had not yet given up the idea of capturing the prince.

"It will not be safe for the Kronprinz to remain here," the fat chamberlain exclaimed anxiously. "His Highness must go inland."

"Better come to Greyfriars, sir!" Harry Wharton exclaimed eagerly. "The Head will be jolly glad to put you up till you can travel to London, and you will be quite safe there."

"Certainly I require some change of clothing," the prince said, with a smile. "I will accept your offer with pleasure."

"This way, then, sir."

The picnickers moved along the shore towards Cliff House. Marjorie and Clara were looking at their watches in alarm. They had already overstayed the time they were allowed by their headmistress. But, under the circumstances, there was no doubt that Miss Penelope Primrose would forgive them.

At the gate of Cliff House they parted with the juniors. Fish and Hazeldene had gone to collect up the crockery and baskets. That was only fair, as they had not done any of the swimming. The prince bowed most profoundly to Marjorie and Clara as they left him, evidently very much impressed by the sweet and graceful ways of the "English misses."

The wet juniors, with their equally wet charges, tramped away up the lane to Greyfriars. There was little danger of catching cold in the hot sunshine so long as they remained in motion, at all events.

The juniors were in a jubilant mood. They had intended to have a Coronation celebration at Greyfriars, but they had not thought of the luck of capturing a Coronation representative from a foreign Court.

Prince Otto was "only a German prince," true, and his principality was probably no larger than a London or Manchester suburb. But he was a real prince—a real live prince, with a real live chamberlain, and that was impressive enough to impress Greyfriars. As Nugent remarked in an undertone, it was not every picnic party that came back the richer by a prince and a baron.

"That's Greyfriars, your Highness," said Harry Wharton, as they came in sight of the old school. "My hat! There will be a sensation when they hear!"

The prince smiled.

"It is a fine old place," he said.

They marched in.

At the sight of the wet clothes and the two strangers fellows gathered round at once from all sides.

"Hallo!" exclaimed Bulstrode, the captain of the Remove.

"Who's your friend, Wharton?"

"Prince Otto of Kaltebad," said Wharton carelessly.

Bulstrode almost fell down.

"P-p-prince!" he gasped.

"Oh, yes!"

"Prince Which?"

"Otto!"

"Of where?"

"Kaltebad."

"My hat!"

"I say, you fellows—"

"My word! Let's look at the prince."

"Stand back!" said Wharton. "Where the dickens are your manners? Don't you know better than to crowd round Royalty in that way?"

"Phew!"

"Oh!"

"My aunt!"

And Harry Wharton & Co., with a great deal of dignity, marched on to the School House, forming a sort of guard of honour round the prince and his chamberlain.

THE SEVENTH CHAPTER.

The Prince at Greyfriars.

DR. LOCKE, the Head of Greyfriars, looked from his study window, and was astounded. As it happened, Dr. Locke had been reading in the newspaper of some of the expected Coronation guests, and among the portraits there there was one of the youthful Prince Otto of Kaltebad. The Head recognised him at once as he saw him crossing the Close, and his amazement was great.

"Extraordinary!" he exclaimed.

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, who was in the study chatting with the Head, looked at the doctor in surprise.

"What is extraordinary?" he asked.

"The prince."

"Eh?"

"He is here."

"Who is here?"

"Look!"

Mr. Quelch joined the Head at the window.

"Dear me!" he exclaimed. "Extraordinary indeed!"

"I have read that Prince Otto was coming over to Britain in his own yacht," said Dr. Locke. "He appears to have landed here—in fact, as he appeared to be soaked with water, is it possible that he has been wrecked?"

"Dear me! Is it possible?"

"I must go and receive him."

The Head, considerably flustered, hurried from the study. He was on the steps in time to receive the august visitor.

"Prince Otto of Kaltebad, please, sir," said Harry Wharton.

The Head bowed low.

"Welcome to Greyfriars, your Highness," he said very courteously. "I trust your Highness has met with no accident?"

"Mein Gott! I have been wreck," said the prince, who, although he spoke very good English in a way, had the German gift for turning past participles into infinitives when he used the strange and difficult language of this island. "I have been wreck on rock. I have been rescue from watery grave by your brave boys."

"I am delighted to hear it, your Highness."

"Hein! You are delight to hear that I have been wreck!" exclaimed the prince, in amazement.

The Head coughed.

"Ahem! No! To hear that you have been rescued by my boys," he said. "But pray come in, your Highness! Pray allow me to show you to a room where you may obtain a change of dry clothing. Pray."

"You are very good, Herr Doctor."

And the prince was conducted into the house. His chamberlain kept close at his heels. It was evident that the prince could not do anything at all without the assistance of his chamberlain, even to changing his wet attire.

"You boys had better go and change at once," said Mr. Quelch.

And the juniors thought so, too. They tramped up to the Remove dormitory, where they were followed by an eager crowd, keen for information.

"How did it happen, Wharton?"

"Who fished him out?"

"Is he a real prince?"

"Where does he come from?"

"Who rescued him?"

"Was it you, Fish?"

Fisher T. Fish coughed. He could not very well say that it was he, and yet he did not care to say anything else.

"I guess I was on the scene," he said.

"Did you pull him out?"

"Well, I helped."

"Rats!" said Vernon-Smith. "I'll bet you did nothing but swank about what you would have done under some other circumstances."

"I guess—"

"Did Fish help to pull him out, Wharton?" demanded a dozen voices.

"Yes," said Harry, laughing.

"He didn't get wet doing it," said Skinner sceptically.

"You see, he was standing on the shore, and he only had to lend a hand," Harry explained.

"Oh!"

"He didn't do any of the swimming?"

"Ask him."

"Did you go in, Fish?"

"I guess I wasn't needed," said Fish. "I was more useful standing and—giving directions and helping at the finish."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

ANSWERS

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"Fish and I didn't go in," said Hazeldene frankly. "We can't swim well enough."

"I guess I can swim with any guy in this college!" exclaimed the American junior warmly. "I didn't go in just now because—because—"

"Just because!" agreed Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors towelled themselves down, and felt none the worse for their adventure. They changed their clothes and went down, anxious to hear how the prince was getting on. Trotter, the page, brought Harry Wharton a message from the Head, and Harry went to the Head's study.

"Come in, Wharton," said Dr. Locke, with his most genial smile. "I wish to thank you for what you have done—you and the others. I have had a talk with Prince Otto. He was going to London, it appears, to take part in the Coronation ceremonies, and a steamer belonging to a gang of Anarchists followed him, with the intention, apparently, of capturing him, and then making terms with the Government of his State, Kaltebad. You have saved the King's guest, Wharton."

"I'm very glad, sir."

"The prince's chamberlain, Baron Rotenau, dreads that the Anarchists may not have given up their plans, and may have landed with the intention of capturing the prince, if possible. It has been decided that Prince Otto is to remain at Greyfriars until a military guard can be sent down from London to take him to Buckingham Palace in perfect safety. The baron has already been telegraphing to London. Prince Otto will therefore remain at the school at least until tomorrow, when the soldiers will arrive, and I need not impress upon you that he must be treated with the greatest respect, as a guest of King George the Fifth."

"Certainly, sir."

"The prince appears to be very grateful to you, Wharton, and I do not wonder; and I think he desires to show great friendliness to yourself and your friends while he is here."

"He is very kind, sir."

"The prince is very young, and—and perhaps still somewhat boyish in temperament," said the Head hesitatingly. "If he should enter into any—any fun, or anything of that sort, you will, of course, remember that the respect due to his rank must not be forgotten for a single moment."

"I understand, sir."

And Wharton left the Head's study.

As he went down the passage, he received a slap on the shoulder from someone who came strolling out of the side corridor, and he swung round with an exclamation.

"You silly fathead! Oh!"

It was the prince!

THE EIGHTH CHAPTER.

The Remove Cricketers.

PRINCE OTTO burst into a hearty laugh.

"Pray excuse me!" he exclaimed. "I punch your shoulder because I wish to speak with you, isn't it?"

Wharton turned crimson.

"Pardon me, your Highness!" he exclaimed. "I—I thought it was one of the chaps. I—I'm sorry I called you a fathead!"

Prince Otto laughed again merrily.

"It is all right, as you say," he replied. "Baron, what is the matter?"

Baron Rotenau was close behind the prince, and he was holding up his fat hands, apparently utterly horrified.

"Mein prinz!" he gasped.

It was evidently very much against Kaltebad Court etiquette for the Crown Prince to be called a fathead.

The prince laughed good-naturedly.

"My dear baron, you must remember that we are not in Kaltebad now!" he exclaimed. "Neither are we in the court of my honoured father."

"Mein prinz!" moaned the baron.

"I have thank you for to save my life, my young friend," said the prince. "It appears that I am to stay here till tomorrow. My chamberlain has arranged it with your kind head-master. It seems that it is not safe for me to travel without a guard."

"Mein prinz! The Anarchists—"

"Oh, it is nonsense!" said Prince Otto. "As for Starke-kase, the Anarchist, I would give him what the British call the punch in eye if I see him."

"Your Highness!"

"I am not afraid of him, baron."

"But your august person—"

"My august person is quite safe."

"Your princely hand could not be allowed to strike the disgusting features of a brutal Anarchist, mein prinz."

The prince laughed.

"My princely hand would do so, nevertheless, if I met with him," he replied. "But I am not displeased to remain till tomorrow at the school. It is a beautiful old place, and the boys are most jolly youngsters. I desire to see their amusements and their work; it is experience for me, and I am on

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ONE
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my travels to observe and to learn. The manners and customs of the school are very interesting."

The chamberlain bowed low.

"It is as your Highness wishes," he murmured.

Wharton grinned. It was rather curious to be called upon to show his manners and customs to the stranger, and it occurred to him that it should rather be as he wished, though to the chamberlain it was evident that there were no wishes in the wide world excepting his prince's.

"I am entirely at your Highness's service," said Harry Wharton, with a bow. "Perhaps your Highness would like to see some cricket."

The prince's eyes gleamed.

"Oh, I shall be so please!" he exclaimed.

"Pray follow me, then, your Highness."

Harry Wharton led the way, and the prince accompanied him, the chamberlain following behind, looking a little worried. To a gentleman trained in the stuffy etiquette of a little German court, Wharton's frank manners savoured of irreverence. But the prince was evidently less impressed by his own greatness than the chamberlain was. He came swinging along with his hands in his pockets, a sight which made Baron Rotenau roll up his eyes towards the ceiling.

A procession of fellows gathered round and followed. Wharton's friend, the prince, attracted universal attention. It wasn't every fellow who could stroll across the Close with a prince—even a German one.

"Blessed tuft-hunter," muttered Snoop.

But that was only envy. Snoop would willingly have kissed the dust from the princely boots, if he had been allowed to do so.

Many of the Remove were at cricket practice, and there was a Sixth-Form match going on. Bulstrode, who was captain of the Remove in these days, was keeping his team at hard practice, having a defeat by Courtfield to avenge. Courtfield was a County Council school, and a licking from Courtfield hit the Greyfriars fellows peculiarly hard. They fancied themselves at cricket, and did not like a licking from Council school chaps.

They had had to take it all the same.

Bulstrode was keen to get his team into form, and try again; and to that end he was making them work.

He called out to Harry Wharton as the latter appeared on the ground with the prince.

"Time you took a hand here, Wharton."

"Right-ho," said Harry.

He turned to the prince.

"I'm going to bat, your Highness," he said. "Will you take a seat here in the pavilion?"

"Thank you," said Prince Otto.

And he sat down. His chamberlain stood beside him. Bob Cherry brought a seat for the chamberlain, but Baron Rotenau declined it with a shake of the head and a bow. It was apparently opposed to all Kaltebad etiquette for the chamberlain to sit down in the presence of his Kronprinz.

Wharton swung upon the pitch, with his bat under his arm. The prince looked on with great interest. Vernon-Smith had taken the ball. Bulstrode was giving the Bounder of Greyfriars a trial in the team.

Vernon-Smith's eyes gleamed as he went on to bowl. He meant mischief of some sort, and Wharton, grasping his bat, was on the look-out for it. It was not so very long since the Bounder of Greyfriars had put Bob Cherry out of play by sending a ball on to his ankle. It would be exactly one of Vernon-Smith's tricks to repeat that performance while Prince Otto was looking on.

But that did not happen to be the intention of the Bounder of Greyfriars at the present moment.

The ball came down, wide of the mark, and shot away wide of Wharton; and there was a sudden roar from Baron Rotenau.

"Ach!"

The fat chamberlain collapsed upon the ground.

"Ach! I am kill! I am murder! Ach!"

"Great Scott! What's the matter?" exclaimed Bob Cherry.

"Himmell!"

"My hat! He must have got the ball," Vernon-Smith exclaimed, in tones of great surprise.

"Ach! Ach!"

Wharton gave the Bounder a furious look.

"You rotter!" he muttered.

Vernon-Smith shrugged his shoulders.

"Accidents will happen," he said.

"That wasn't an accident."

"Oh, rats!"

"Ach! Ach!"

The fat chamberlain sat up, with both hands pressed to his expansive waistcoat. He was gasping and gasping for breath.

"Himmell! What was tat? Himmell!"
 "I'm afraid the ball must have hit you, sir," said Bulstrode. "I'm awfully sorry—ha, ha, ha!—fearfully sorry, sir. Ha, ha!"
 "Te ball!"
 "The cricket-ball, sir. Quite an accident, of course. Ha, ha, ha!"
 Baron Rotenagen groaned.
 "I am knock down and nearly kill! Ach!"
 "My dear baron," said Prince Otto, "pray retire for the present."
 The baron shook his head.
 "I must attend your Highness."
 "Oh, stuff!" said the prince.
 "It is my duty, your Highness."
 The prince made a grimace. He would have been very pleased to be relieved of the attendance of his dutiful chamberlain. But Kaltebad's etiquette did not allow it. Where the Kronprinz was, his chamberlain was bound to be.
 Herr Rotenagen stood up, and rubbed his waistcoat, and kept a very keen eye on the cricketers. Bulstrode took Vernon-Smith off the bowler's end.
 "It was an accident," said the Bounder.
 Bulstrode laughed.
 "You have too many of these accidents," he said. "We shall get into a row with the Head if we rag the visitors."
 "But, I say—"
 "Oh, rats; get off!"
 And the Bounder had to go off. Wharton took the ball, and Baron Rotenagen was in no further danger, but he kept a very wary eye on the players. Prince Otto watched with the keenest interest. He was evidently deeply interested in the English game of cricket, and he seemed to be trying to pick up tips. When the play had proceeded about a quarter of an hour, the prince signed to Wharton to come to him.
 Harry was about to bat, but he obeyed. It was only practice, anyway, and not a match. He handed his bat to Bob Cherry, and joined the prince.
 "It seems to be a splendid game," his Highness remarked.
 "Oh, it's ripping, sir!"
 "I should like to play."
 Wharton hesitated.
 "Have you played before, sir?"
 "Never," said the prince.
 "But if you haven't played—"
 "It seems very easy," said Prince Otto. "You take the bat, and stop the ball from reaching the wicket, and then run to and fro. Is there anything else in the game?"
 Wharton smiled.
 "Well, yes, there are one or two points," he said; "but if you'd like to bat, sir—"
 "I should, truly."
 "Highness—"
 "Oh, don't object, baron; I am determined!"
 "Highness, it is scarcely suitable for the Kronprinz von Kaltebad to play the game of cricket-ball—"
 "Stuff!"
 "I beg your Highness—"
 "Nonsense!"
 "I implore—"
 "Stuff and nonsense!"
 And the prince walked upon the pitch, where the play immediately ceased.

THE NINTH CHAPTER. Prince Otto Plays Cricket.

BULSTRODE looked at Wharton, and gave a little snort. Politeness to a prince was one thing, but cricket was another.
 "What's the little game?" demanded the captain of the Remove.
 "Prince Otto is going to bat."
 "Look here—"
 "Shut up, Bulstrode!" Wharton whispered. "Take it cheerfully."
 "That's all very well!"
 "Exactly. Will you use my bat, your Highness?"
 "Ach, ja!" said the prince. "You are most good."
 He stood at the wicket with Wharton's bat in his hands. He was not much taller than Wharton, and the bat suited him very well. Vernon-Smith came lounging on the pitch with his hands in his pockets.
 "May I bowl, Bulstrode?" he asked.
 Bulstrode hesitated. He knew that the Bounder wanted to play one of his ill-natured pranks upon the prince, and Bulstrode would have been very glad to get rid of the princely cricketer.
 But Harry Wharton chipped in at once.

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"You won't bowl," he said.
 Vernon-Smith looked at him with a sneer.
 "I understood that Bulstrode was cricket captain now," he remarked. "If you are skipper again, of course, you can give orders."
 Bulstrode flushed angrily at once. He had a painful consciousness that things had gone down generally since he had become captain of the Remove. For that reason, any hint that Wharton was thinking of re-assuming his old place as captain of the Form, was enough to touch Bulstrode on a raw spot.
 "You can jolly well keep your orders to yourself, Wharton," he said sharply. "I'm cock of the walk here at present, you know."
 "And, of course, you want to do all the crowing," suggested Frank Nugent. And the cricketers grinned.
 Wharton did not recede in the least.
 "Vernon-Smith's not going to bowl to the prince," he exclaimed. "He wants to play some caddish trick, and it would get us into a row with the Head, to say nothing of the rottenness of ragging a visitor."
 "Mind your own bizney," said the Bounder. "Bulstrode can decide the matter as he likes, I suppose."
 "I suppose it wouldn't do," said Bulstrode. "You can buzz off, Smithy."
 "Look here—"
 "Oh, get out!"
 And the Bounder got out, with a scowl at Harry Wharton. Bulstrode tossed the ball to John Bull, who went on to bowl.
 The prince was watching for the ball. John Bull gave him the easiest one possible, and it whipped the prince's middle stump out of the ground, much to his surprise. The prince swiped at it, and knocked the leg stump down.
 Prince Otto gazed at his wicket.
 "Ach! It has fallen down!" he remarked.
 "Es ist gefallen down," grinned Tom Brown.
 The prince laughed.
 "You're out," explained Bulstrode.
 Wharton gave him a warning look.
 "Put the bails on again," he said.
 "Do you call this cricket?" asked Bulstrode.
 "I call it courtesy to a visitor, and a guest of the King," said Harry.
 Bulstrode grunted.
 "Oh, all right!"
 Tom Brown set up the wicket again. The prince apparently did not know that the fall of the wicket constituted the end of his innings, and he batted again very cheerfully.
 John Bull gave him the easiest bowling he could; but it was clear that if he bowled at the wicket he would knock it down every time, so he gave wides—very wide wides.
 It was about the tenth ball that the prince managed to hit. His bat came into contact with the ball, and knocked it across the field, and several juniors chased after it.
 "Hurrah!" shouted Wharton. "Run!"
 "Run!"
 "Buck up!"
 The prince did not seem to understand for a moment or two. Then he dashed along the pitch, and stopped at the opposite wicket, crossing Ogilvy, who had been playing patience at the other end of the pitch.
 "Back again!" roared Wharton.
 "Ach! I do not see—"
 "Go back!"
 "Back?"
 "Yes—buzz off!"
 The prince gasped.
 "But why do I run here if I run back again?" he demanded. "I may as well stay where I am, at the beginning, hein?"
 "Ha, ha, ha!"
 "It's the game!" gasped Wharton. "Run back!"
 "Ach! Very well."
 And the prince ran back.
 The fieldsmen sent the ball gently in, so as not to take the wicket. The prince stood on the crease again, looking flushed with his exertions, and decidedly pleased with himself.
 "You're two up," said Tom Brown, who was keeping wicket.
 The prince looked puzzled.
 "Two up!" he repeated.
 "Two up, sir."
 "But I do not see. It is not supposed that I shall sit down, is it?" asked the prince.
 "Eh?"
 "But if it is not that I shall sit down, how is it that I am too up?" asked Prince Otto, in a state of great bewilderment.



"After him!" yelled Blake. The juniors raced over the sand and into the water after the Spaniard, but Lopez leaped into the boat, and beat them off with an oar. (An exciting incident in the splendid tale of Tom Merry and Co. entitled "The Schoolboy Castaways," by Martin Clifford, in this week's "Gem" Library. Order to-day. Price One Penny.)

The New Zealand junior roared.

"Ha, ha, ha! I didn't say too up—I said two up."

"The sound is to me the same, but perhaps that is a nicety of your wonderful language," said the prince.

"Ha, ha! I mean you are two runs to the score."

"Where is the score?"

Tom Brown pointed to the board.

"Ah, it is very mysterious!" he exclaimed. "I did not make my runs to the score, as you call it—I ran in that direction." And he pointed to Ogilvy's wicket. Tom Brown almost wept.

"Yes, but a run to the wicket is a run to the score," he explained.

"Ach! It seems to me that a run in one direction is not a run in another direction, but perhaps I do not understand."

"Very likely," grinned Tom Brown. "What I mean is, that when you take a run, it is put on the score, you see. You have two runs now; they are added to the score."

"But I have only run twice."

"Just so."

"Then how can I have twenty-two runs?" demanded the prince.

Tom Brown gasped.

"Twenty-two!"

"Ja, ja, zwei-und-zwanzig—what you call twenty-two."

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"But I didn't say you had twenty-two runs!" roared Tom Brown. "My only chapeau! What are you getting at? I said you had two runs added to the score."

"But a score is twenty, is it not?"

"Eh?"

"I am certain that my English tutor, when I studied in Kaltebad, assured me that a score was twenty in the English language," said the prince firmly. "Two added to twenty is twenty-two—zwei-und-zwanzig."

Tom Brown sat on the grass, and gasped.

"My only hat! Explain to him, somebody!"

The prince was looking round with a very puzzled expression. Most of the cricketers were doubled up. To them English seemed a plain and easy language; to the German prince it was crammed with hidden mysteries and pitfalls.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Bob Cherry. "We call the number of runs the score—the runs you take in the game."

"Ach! Then a score may be any number?"

"Of course."

"That is very curious," said the prince. "A score may be twenty, and a score also may be any number. It is very odd."

"Ha, ha! A cricket score isn't twenty—it's the runs you take."

"Ach! If I take twenty runs, that is a score?"

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"Yes."

"And if I take twelve runs?"

"That is your score."

"My tutor assured me that in the English language twelve was called a dozen," said the prince. "It is very strange."

"Ha, ha! So it is a dozen."

"Then it is a dozen and a score as well."

"Ye-es."

"And twenty runs—is that a dozen also?"

"Oh, dear, no! No fear!"

"Ah!" exclaimed the prince, a light breaking upon him. "Any number may be a score, but any number may not be a dozen. Is it not so?"

"Exactly."

"Ach! Now I understand with perfection."

It was doubtful if the prince understood to perfection, as he termed it but, as Nugent remarked in a whisper, life was too short to explain further. John Bull bowled again to the prince, and again the German hit the ball deep into the long field, by a miracle.

He ran again, and stopped at Ogilvy's wicket as the ball came in, Ogilvy remaining at the pavilion end. There was no time for more than one run, but the prince started running back along the pitch.

"Go back!" roared Ogilvy.

"Eh!"

"Go back!"

"But I am coming back now."

"Back!"

"Ach! But this is back, is it not?" exclaimed Prince Otto. "There cannot be two backs in your wonderful language."

The fieldsmen threw themselves into the grass and yelled. Prince Otto marched right on to his original wicket. But Ogilvy had plenty of time to cross the pitch again, for the fieldsmen with the ball was in hysterics, and not at all in a state to send the leather in.

The prince regained his wicket, evidently very much astonished by the merriment of the cricketers. However, he laughed too, himself, out of good-nature.

"That is also two up," he remarked to Tom Brown.

The New Zealand junior grinned joyously.

"Yes, that's two more up," he said.

"Ach! More up than the others?" asked the prince.

"Eh?"

"I am new to this great game," Prince Otto exclaimed modestly. "But I should like to know how two runs can be more up than two other runs. Is this upness of the runs a peculiar quality which I do not comprehend?"

Tom Brown shrieked.

"Yes, that's it!" he gasped. "Exactly. The upfulness of the runs is terrific, as Hurree Jamsat Ram Singh used to say. Go on!"

"I think I shall become a great cricketer," the prince remarked, as he took his stand at the wicket again. "I begin to understand the game with great perfection."

Which statement threw many of the junior cricketers into a state bordering upon wild hysteria.

THE TENTH CHAPTER.

A Deadly Bowler!

PRINCE OTTO, as a cricketer, was a great success, in one sense, at all events. He gave the Remove more merriment in a short half-hour than they had enjoyed in weeks before. Even Bulstrode, keen as he was to get on with the business of practice, could not help enjoying the scene. Between the mysteries of cricket, and the mysteries of the English language, the young prince's innings was an extremely exhilarating one. After a time the prince suggested that he should bowl, and his suggestion was at once acceded to. The Removites looked for a different variety of fun, and they had it.

There was no great keenness to bat against the princely bowling. The cricketers had a strong suspicion that the batsman was likely to suffer more than the wicket. But John Bull volunteered, and he took the bat to face the prince.

Prince Otto grasped the ball as he had seen the bowlers grasp it, and took a little run in imitation. The juniors watched him breathlessly.

Whiz!

The ball flew from the prince's hand.

"Yah!"

It was a terrific yell from Vernon-Smith, who was standing a dozen yards away. The Bounder of Greyfriars was seen to clap his hand suddenly to his head, and begin a wild dance.

"Ow—ow! Yah! Oh!"

"My hat!"

"Where's the ball?"

"Ask Smithy! Ha, ha, ha!"

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"Ow!" roared Vernon-Smith. "Yaroooh!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! My head! I'm brained! Yow! Yaroooh! Oh!"

The juniors shrieked with laughter.

Vernon-Smith had had a most unpleasant knock; but after his own tricks it was really only a kind of poetical justice. The prince was looking round for the ball. Tom Brown picked it up, and tossed it back to him.

"Ugh! Ow! Oh, you idiot!" groaned Vernon-Smith.

"Accident, you know," said Harry Wharton.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ow! The dangerous imbecile."

"Shut up!"

"I don't care whether he's a prince or not. He's a silly fathead!"

"Somebody had better see Smithy off the field," said Wharton.

"Yes, rather!"

"I—ow! Yow! My head! I won't go! The silly ass!"

But Vernon-Smith had no choice about going. Three or four juniors seized him, and marched him off, groaning and struggling.

"Must be civil to a visitor, and a guest of the King, you know," Frank Nugent said cheerfully. "Buzz off!"

"Look here! Ow!"

"Accidents will happen, you know. You make enough of them happen yourself, don't you?"

"Ow! My head! Yow! Leggo!"

"Buzz off, then!"

And Vernon-Smith, with an aching head, and a vile temper, "buzzed off." "Accidents" with a cricket-ball did not seem nearly so funny to him when he was the victim instead of the victimiser.

The fieldsmen and the spectators gave Prince Otto a wide berth after that. There was no telling where the ball would go. The batsman was probably the safest fellow on the field.

Prince Otto prepared to bowl again.

"Look out!" muttered Wharton.

"Stand clear!"

"Get ready to dodge!"

And most of the juniors crowded back behind the bowler. But as it happened that was about the worst thing they could have done, for the ball left Prince Otto's hand as he swung it up, and shot directly behind his back.

Biff!

"Yaroooh!" roared Fisher T. Fish.

"What the—"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Ow! Thunder! Yow! Great snakes! Yaroooh!"

Fisher T. Fish picked the ball out of the breast of his jacket, and rubbed his waistcoat. The prince looked round at him.

"Ach! Is that the ball?" he exclaimed.

"I guess it is!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Do you call this bowling, or playing with a giddy boomerang?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach! I am so sorry!"

Fish groaned.

"Oh, it's all right," he gasped. "I've got a bruise about as big as a roc's egg, but it's all right. Go ahead!"

And he tossed back the ball.

"I'm very sorry—most and perfectly sorry."

"Not at all!" said Fish, with a wave of the hand. "Go ahead, prince! Your Highness is quite welcome."

The juniors chuckled. They understood Fish. Being a native of a Republican country, titles had a fascination for him. Like a true Republican, he was willing to kiss the earth where princely feet had trod.

As a matter of fact, it was extremely probable that when Fisher T. Fish returned to New York, his favourite story would be how he had been biffed by a cricket-ball bowled by a real prince.

"But I hope you are not hurt!" persisted the prince.

"Oh, I guess not. We're pretty tough over there," said Fisher T. Fish. "I guess I can stand harder knocks than that, your Highness."

"You are very good."

"Not at all, your Majesty."

"You scrumptious ass!" muttered Nugent. "He isn't Majesty—he's Highness."

"I guess it's the same thing."

"I think that I will not bowl again," said the prince, after some consideration. "It is not sufficient that I have practised. I think I shall make good batsman, but the bowler, no."

"Oh, never say die, your High Majesty," said Fisher T. Fish—"I mean, your Majestic Highness!"

"Shut up, you silly ass!" said Bob Cherry.

"I guess—"

"It is time that his Highness retired to prepare to dine

with the Herr Doctor," said the fat chamberlain, coming forward apologetically.

The prince sniffed.

"Ach! Very good, then!"

And the portly German gentleman marched the prince off—not very much to the princely pleasure, to judge by the expression upon the princely face.

THE ELEVENTH CHAPTER.

A Biff—Not for Bunter.

HARRY WHARTON came into No. 1 Study in the Remove passage with a kettle full of water.

The sun was setting, and the bright June afternoon coming to a close. The chums of the Remove had come in hungry from cricket, and they were preparing tea. Wharton and Nugent, who shared No. 1 Study, were entertaining Bob Cherry and Mark Linley of No. 13, and Fisher T. Fish, from No. 14. The five juniors made the study pretty full, and as all of them had brought some little supply, the table was pretty well spread for a tea-table in a junior study.

Wharton put the kettle on the spirit-stove, which stood upon the window-sill, in order to keep the fumes of the methylated spirit out of the room. The weather was far too warm for a fire, especially in a crowded study. The window was wide open, and the evening breeze came lightly in from the old green Close.

"Jolly weather!" said Bob Cherry, as he dropped in. "What a ripping picnic we had to-day under the cliffs!"

"Jolly!" said Nugent. "Your necktie was a great success, too."

Bob Cherry looked warlike for a moment; but, remembering that he was a guest in No. 1 Study, he unclenched his hands and unknitted his brows.

"Oh, rats!" he replied.

"We're going to have cold tommy," said Harry Wharton. "We can't stand a fire in the study on these blessed June days. We've got some hard boiled eggs from Mrs. Mimbles and some ham. That's all right?"

"Ripping!"

"And there's jam and marmalade. It's raspberry jam in the soapdish, and strawberry in the paste jar."

"Good!"

"Wire in, then!"

The door of the study gently opened. A fat face with great glimmering spectacles was slyly inserted.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Bunter! Buzz off!"

"But, I say, you fellows——"

"Get out!" roared Wharton.

"Look here," said Billy Bunter, blinking at them warily, and standing ready to slam the door and bolt at a hostile movement. "I'm hungry, and I want my tea. Tea isn't any good to me in Hall—measly bread-and-butter and tea. Besides, I've had tea in Hall. I used to be in this study——"

"Thank goodness you don't belong to it now!" said Nugent.

"Oh, really, Franky——"

"Don't call me 'Franky!'" roared Nugent.

"I think I might call one of my oldest friends by his Christian name," said Bunter pathetically. "You may not feel the old friendship for me, Franky; but I feel the same as ever towards you."

Nugent snorted.

"You feel you'd like to have a feed, or to borrow some money?" he asked. "They're the only feelings you've ever had in your life!"

"Oh, really, Frank——"

Nugent seized the shovel from the grate and swung it into the air.

Slam!

The door shut, and Bunter's footsteps were heard receding down the passage.

Nugent threw the shovel into the fender again, and sat down, with a gasp.

"The fat bounder!" he exclaimed. "I can't stand that chap—and I won't! Fancy his having the cheek to call me Franky! Pah!"

The door opened again a few minutes later. The chums of the Remove looked round in wrath. Bunter blinked in.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Buzz out!" yelled Nugent.

"I've come to tea——"

Harry Wharton rose.

"Look here," he said, "you can't come in here, Bunter! We're fed up with you. All the school knows that you blackmailed that fellow Heath when he was here, and made him give you money not to tell about the plot against Bob Cherry. I'm blessed if I know why the Head didn't expel you along with Heath. But you're not fit for a decent chap to talk to. We can't stand you. Keep away."

"Oh, really, Harry——"

"Don't call me Harry!" roared Wharton. "I won't stand it!"

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ONE
PENNY.

"Harry, old man——"

"By Jove!" said Wharton, breathing hard. "If you don't shut up I'll come out and squash you on the floor—honour bright!"

"Look here, Harry——"

Wharton made a stride towards the door. It slammed, and fast footsteps pattered away down the Remove passage.

"The fat cad!" said Wharton, as he sat down again. "It's curious that he can't see that he's got over the limit this time. I won't stand Bunter any longer!"

"Same here," said Bob Cherry. "His lying and borrowing might be put up with; but when it comes to extorting money from a chap, I think it's the limit."

"Yes, rather!"

"I guess you're right," said Fisher T. Fish. "Over there we'd rag Bunter bald-headed. By the way, I wonder where his Highness is?"

"Eh? Bunter's Highness?"

"No, ass! His Highness the Prince of Kaltebad."

"Oh, blow his Highness!" said Nugent. "Pass the ham."

"Here you are. His Majesty——"

"He isn't Majesty," said Nugent. "You blessed Yanks mix up the titles. Majesty is a giddy king—a prince is only Highness."

"Well, he's a Crown Prince," said Fish.

Nugent grunted.

"Yes, Crown Prince of a blessed little kingdom about as big as Friardale!" he said. "Pass the mustard, and leave his Highness alone."

"He's an awfully jolly chap!" said Harry Wharton. "If he stayed at Greyfriars long enough we could teach him how to play cricket."

"Ha, ha, ha! He would want some teaching! I wonder how the Bounder's head is feeling just now?" roared Bob Cherry.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Hallo, hallo, hallo! Is that Bunter again?"

It was Bunter again. The fat junior blinked into the study after a cautious tap at the door.

"I say, you fellows——"

"Get out!"

"But, I say——"

"Look here," said Nugent, "get out! We're fed up with you, you blackmailing young rotter. Mind, if you open that door again I'll biff this cushion right at you the moment you get it open. So remember!"

And Nugent grasped a cushion.

Slam!

"Beasts!" yelled Bunter through the keyhole.

Then he vanished.

The juniors resumed their tea. Bunter had a most irritating effect upon their nerves, and they were exasperated. Nugent kept the cushion by his side, ready to "biff" it at the Owl of the Remove if he should enter the study again.

There was a sound of footsteps in the passage a few minutes later, and Frank Nugent's eyes began to gleam.

"It's that cad again!" he muttered.

"The fat bounder! Biff him!"

"I mean to!"

Frank Nugent grasped the cushion and rose to his feet. He stopped just opposite the door and raised the cushion in both hands.

There was a tap at the door, and it opened.

Whiz!

Crash!

The cushion caught the new-comer full on the chest as

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the door opened and swept him back across the passage against the opposite wall.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Nugent.

"Ach!"

"What—I— Oh, my hat!"

"Who is it?" yelled Wharton, springing up

"The prince!"

THE TWELFTH CHAPTER.

A Prince to Tea.

PRINCE OTTO, swept back by the cushion crashing upon his chest, had been hurled upon the opposite wall of the passage, and had slid down into a sitting posture. He sat there, gasping for breath, dazed, and wondering what had happened.

"Ach! Himmel! Ach!" he gasped.

The juniors rushed out of the study, greatly confused.

The "biff" had been for Bunter, and Frank had certainly been a little hasty. But the call from the prince was so entirely unexpected that perhaps Frank Nugent was not so much to blame, after all. The juniors had been far from looking for a visit from the Kronprinz von Kaltebad in a junior study.

"Ach! Himmel!"

"Oh, dear!"

"So sorry!"

"Quite a mistake!"

"Please let me help you, sir!"

Willing hands grasped the young prince and set him upon his feet. He was gasping for breath, and seemed very much shaken up. But his good-humour had not failed him.

"Ach! And that is a joke, I suppose, of you youngsters?" he exclaimed. "It is what you English schoolboys have for joke, is it not so?"

"Oh, no, sir!" exclaimed Wharton. "It was a mistake!"

"We were expecting somebody else," gasped Nugent. "I was biffing the cushion at a chap, you see, who has been bothering us, and I took you for him."

"Yes, yes, I see! It is mistake—quite mistake!"

"Yes, sir, quite!"

"We're so sorry!"

"I guess we're awfully sorry, your Majestic Highness," said Fisher T. Fish. "I hope your Serene Majesty is not hurt?"

"Oh, no, not at all—nein, nein!" exclaimed the prince.

"I overlook it. It is what you call quite all right!"

"Will you come in, sir?" asked Nugent.

The prince nodded graciously.

"Ach! But yes," he said. "I was told that No. 1 was the study of my young friend Wharton, and so I came to visit."

"Please walk in."

"Very much honoured, sir."

"I guess we're real glad, your Majestic Serenity," said Fisher T. Fish. "Walk right in, your Highness. Will your Majesty take a seat?"

The prince looked round the study with an interested eye. He glanced at the tea-table, and looked appreciative.

"You have the meal?" he asked.

"Yes, sir," said Harry Wharton. "Would you care to join us, sir? Or perhaps you dine with the Head, sir?"

"I dine with the Herr Doctor," assented the prince; "but it would be joyful to join my young friends in the study tea. Yes."

"Please sit down!"

The prince graciously took a chair which Harry Wharton placed for him. The juniors all stood up. They did not quite know whether it was the thing to sit down in the presence of a crown prince. And although they had the firm conviction that any Englishman was as good as any foreign prince, it would not have been cour-

teous to avow that conviction in the presence of the Highness of Kaltebad.

The prince waved his hand.

"Sit down," he said.

"Thank you, your Highness."

"Make some more tea, Franky," whispered Wharton. "You cut off to Mrs. Mumble's, Bob, for some more tuck—quick as you can. Tell her to put it down to me."

"Right-ho!"

"Raid somewhere for some crockery, Marky."

"What-ho!" said Mark Linley.

"It is very pleasant and joyful to sit down with my young friends to the study tea," the prince remarked. "I am to dine with the Herr Head, but this is more to my liking. It does remind me of my student days, hein? You have the life of the free and easy."

"I guess so, your Imperial Highness."

"You make the tea yourself, with pot," the prince remarked, in great admiration, as Frank manipulated the teapot. "It is very clever."

"Quite easy, sir," said Frank.

Mark Linley came in with an armful of crockery. In honour of the princely guest, he had gathered it recklessly from other studies along the passage. It was no time to stand on ceremony.

Bob Cherry bolted in with a bag, which he opened on the desk, the prince affecting to see nothing of the preparations.

The tea set before Prince Otto was really an appetising one, and it was quite possible that he would enjoy it more than the more stately and much duller repast with Head in the old oak-panelled dining-room of the Head's house.

The juniors had almost finished their tea, and they were willing to devote themselves to waiting upon their princely guest.

Prince Otto ate and drank with great gusto, and evidently enjoyed himself. Wharton, glancing from the window, saw Baron Rotenauigen wandering in the Close, stopped to speak to nearly everybody he met. Harry grinned as it dawned upon him that Prince Otto had given his venerable mentor the slip in coming to the study. The greatness of being a Kronprinz of a German State, perhaps, bored the young and cheerful Otto sometimes, and he was glad to get away from the persistent reminders of his greatness.

There was a sudden rush of feet in the passage.

John Bull and Tom Brown rushed in.

"You bounders!" roared Tom.

"You burglars!" yelled John Bull.

"Eh—what!"

"You've raided all our crocks!"

"You've collared our—"

"Oh!"

"Ah!"

The juniors suddenly perceived the prince. Wharton's agonised signs to them to shut up had been lost until they saw the prince. Then they understood.

"Oh! H'm!"

"Ahem! Ah!"

With crimson faces they backed towards the door. They backed out, and darted along the passage. At the end they paused to glare at one another.

"You ass, Brown!"

"You clump, Bull!"

"Ha, ha, ha!" came from No. 1 Study, in a clear, boyish laugh.

It was the prince. The humour of the situation had struck Prince Otto at once, and he was laughing heartily; and Harry Wharton & Co. joined in his merriment.

THE THIRTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Anarchist.

"**M**EIN PRINZ!"

Prince Otto had finished his tea, and risen, and was looking out of the window into the dusky Close. The sun had set beyond the Black Pike, and the moon



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Puff, puff! Bob Cherry's straw-hat was lifted from his head, and sailed away on the wind towards the rocks. Bob uttered an exclamation, and the bags dropped from his hands as he made a wild clutch at his hat. Crash!
(See page 4.)

was glimmering over the Close now. The grounds were deserted. In study and passage and common-room there were lights and merry voices.

"Mein Prinz!"

It was the voice of the fat chamberlain from the Close. He had caught sight of the prince at the study window. Prince Otto laughed.

"I am here, Baron."

"Mein Prinz! I feared that the Anarchists had—"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Mein Prinz—"

"There is no danger from the Anarchists here, my good Baron," said the prince. "Even Starckekase will not venture to come here."

"I fear that he may, your Highness."

"Stuff!" said the prince.

Baron Roten Augen disappeared into the house, evidently with the intention of coming up to look for the prince. Prince Otto turned to the juniors.

"Let us escape him," he said. "He tires me. He bores me to a dead man."

"Good!" said Wharton. "This way!"

"I should like to look round the school in this beautiful moonlight," said the prince. "After that I have to dine with the Herr Doctor. Perhaps you will show me the round."

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"With pleasure, sir."

"I guess it will be a great honour to show round your Majestic Highness," said Fisher T. Fish.

"Hear, hear!"

The prince followed Harry Wharton from the study. But the chamberlain had been too quick for them. He was already labouring up the stairs, and he called out as soon as he caught sight of the prince in the passage:

"Highness—highness!"

Prince Otto paused.

"Ja, ja, Baron."

"It is time to dine with the Herr Doctor."

"Oh, very well—very well."

"Shall we wait for you in the Close, sir?" asked Harry Wharton.

"Yes, yes; you are very kind."

And Prince Otto walked away with his chamberlain. The latter talked to him in guttural German all the time, evidently remonstrating, and the prince tossed his head as he listened. He looked a great deal like a big schoolboy being hauled over the coals by his tutor.

"What a jolly chap he is!" said Harry Wharton. "He doesn't seem much older than Wingate, and some of the fellows of the Sixth."

"No; he's ripping!" said Frank.

"I guess he's top notch," said Fisher T. Fish. "So jolly condescending, too, for a real high Majesty."

"Ass!"
"I guess——"
"Fathead!"
"I reckon——"
"Chump!"

And with that expression of opinion, the juniors left Fisher T. Fish to daydream upon the delights of being spoken to by a prince.

Harry Wharton & Co. strolled out into the Close. They had not done their prep. for the evening; but they had no doubt of getting excused prep. under the peculiar circumstances of having a prince to entertain.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!" exclaimed Bob Cherry suddenly. "There's Gossy arguing with somebody. I wonder what the row is."

The unmusical voice of Gosling, the school porter, could be heard proceeding from the gates. The juniors drew near the spot. In the dim light of the lamp over the gates, they made out a tall dark figure. The gates were open, but Gosling was barring the way, and Gosling did not appear to be in a good temper.

"I tell you you ain't to come in," he said. "I've got horders to keep out any furriner who comes."

"One of the prince's suite from the yacht. I expect," Mark Linley remarked.

"It can't be," he said. "All the crew of the yacht and the rest of the prince's attendants have gone to the inn at Friardale, to wait there till he leaves to-morrow. The prince insisted that the Head should not be put to the trouble of accommodating any more persons than himself and the chamberlain."

"Then this chap——"

"Hark!"

"But I must come in," said the stranger, in good English, but with a heavy German accent. "I wish to see the prince."

"What prince?"

"Prince Otto."

"Wot I says is this 'ere—I ain't going to talk to you," said Gosling. "You go hoff—that's what I says."

"Will you take a message to the prince?"

"Good-hevening."

"Will you take a message——"

"You be hoff, that's what I says."

"I wish to send a message to the prince."

"Fine weather, ain't it?" said Gosling.

The juniors chuckled. Gosling had evidently had orders not to admit to anybody who might inquire, that there was a German prince at Greyfriars. The precaution was taken in case the rascals on the black steamer should attempt to land and get on the track of the prince again.

Gosling was doing his duty. And the stranger's pretence that he had a message for the prince would not hold water, for they knew that orders had been sent to all the prince's suite not to come to the school.

"It must be a chap off the black steamer," Wharton whispered.

"By George! One of the giddy Anarchists."

"The hound may have a bomb with him," murmured Nugent.

"I don't think that's likely," he said. "They're not that kind of Anarchist, I believe. The prince said they simply wanted to capture him, to hold him as a prisoner while making terms with their home government. I hardly think they mean anything worse than that. But listen!"

There was a sound of the clinking of metal, and the juniors caught a glimmer of gold in the gleam of the lamp over the gate. Then the stranger's voice was heard again. Gosling was tucking away a couple of sovereigns in his waistcoat pocket.

"Will you tell me, then, simply whether the prince is here?" asked the stranger.

"Wot I says is this 'ere. I obeys horders."

"But is Prince Otto staying at the school?"

"I hain't nothing to say."

"Bah! I know he is here!" the man exclaimed angrily. "I have learned as much by hearing talk among the seamen in the village."

"That ain't nothing to do with me," said Gosling stolidly.

"Wot I says is this 'ere——"

"I know he is here. I am assured of it."

Harry Wharton and the others came out into the light by the gate. Wharton looked quickly at the stranger, and recognised him. It was the black-bearded, black-moustached man, who had followed the prince in the boat after the wreck of the yacht. It was the leader of the Anarchists.

"It's he!" Nugent exclaimed.

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In the "GEM" Library. A Grand Complete story of Tom Merry & Co., entitled:

"It's the chap they call Starkekase."

"That's the man."

The big, black-bearded German turned quickly on the juniors. He recognised them, too. There was a gleam of rage in his eyes.

"Ach! You, too!" he exclaimed. "It is to you that I owe my failure!"

And he swung round his hand at Harry Wharton. If the heavy blow had taken effect the junior would have been stretched upon the ground. But it did not! Harry Wharton dodged the blow; and then, shouting to the others, he sprang at the Anarchist. The juniors rushed to the attack, and in a second the big German was sprawling in the dusty road, with the juniors scrambling over him.

THE FOURTEENTH CHAPTER.

Ducked

STARKEKASE shrieked out furious words in German, which it was perhaps as well that the juniors did not understand. He struggled in the grasp of the chums of the Remove, but, powerful man as he was, they were too many for him. He rolled in the dust, and Bob Cherry sat upon his chest, and Nugent sprawled across his legs, and Harry Wharton fastened a grip upon his throat.

"Got the beast!" said Wharton.

"Hurrah!" panted Bob.

"Ach! Himmel!" roared the German. "Tat you let go, ain't it?"

"Rats!"

"You lets that I gets up."

"Bosh!"

"I am peaceful citizen."

"You're a rotten Anarchist, the chap who was chasing the prince's boat," said Harry Wharton. "I don't know whether you can be locked up, but you ought to be."

"Yes, rather!"

"Wot I says is this 'ere," said Gosling. "You keep 'im till I call the 'Ead, Master Wharton. That's wot I says."

"Good egg! The Head will know."

"Wot I says is——"

Gosling was interrupted. A form came into the light over the gates, and a well-known voice exclaimed:

"Ach, my young friends, you have what you English call a jolly row. Is it that I can help you with the punch of the nose?"

It was the prince.

Wharton uttered an exclamation. The prince had decidedly betrayed now the fact that he was an inmate of Greyfriars College. Starkekase's black eyes gleamed with satisfaction behind his spectacles.

"Ach! Der prinz!" he murmured.

"Whom have we here?" exclaimed Prince Otto.

"The Anarchist, sir."

"Himmel!"

The prince looked down at Starkekase. A frown came over his face, replied to by a look of defiance from the Anarchist.

"So it is you, Herr Starkekase!" exclaimed Otto.

"Ja, ja! It is I," said Starkekase.

"You have followed me."

"As you see."

"We found him asking questions of the porter, sir, and we collared him," Harry Wharton explained. "We thought it might be possible to get him locked up, sir."

"There is no charge," he said. "In this country you do not punish person for political opinion. And the beastly Anarchist is quite safe. And that man, wicked as he is, has not break law."

"He chased your yacht, sir, and made it go on the rocks."

"You take yacht on rocks of own accord!" he exclaimed.

"It is no business to me."

"Well, he's hanging round the school to do mischief," urged Bob Cherry. "He ought to be arrested as a suspicious character, or something."

"I fear that it cannot be done."

"It is I who shall make the charge before the police," said Starkekase, with a sneer. "I shall complain to the police, and make the charge against you of the assault and the batter."

"My hat!"

"Well, if we're going to be charged with assault and battery, we may as well do something to be charged with," Frank Nugent suggested.

"Good egg!"

"There's a ditch across the road!"

"Good! Duck the cad!"

"Hurrah! Duck him!"

Herr Starkekase struggled furiously.

His spectacles came off, and so did his collar, and his coat was ripped up the back, but he could not get out of the grasp of the juniors.

They dragged and rolled him across the road, and plunged him head first into the deep muddy ditch that flowed on the other side.

Splash!

The fat German disappeared into the flowing water.

A terrific bubbling and sputtering and spluttering was heard, and he came up again, covered with mud, red and snorting and furious.

The juniors stood on the bank, roaring with laughter.

"Ach, ach! Groo! Ach!"

"Ha, ha, ha, ha!"

"Himmel! Ach, ach, ach!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The fat German attempted to struggle out of the water. Bob Cherry put out his foot, and pushed him back into the ditch.

"No, you don't!" he remarked.

"Ach, ach!"

"If you want to get out, you can crawl out the other side," said Bob cheerfully. "You can scramble through the hedge."

"Ach!"

"It will be a lesson to you not to come nosing round Greyfriars again, you know," Bob remarked. "No, you're not coming out."

And he gave the German Anarchist another push with his foot, which sent Herr Starkekase floundering in the middle of the ditch.

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared Prince Otto. "It is to laugh! Ha, ha, ha!"

Starkekase spluttered and floundered.

"Aha!" he hissed, in really a fine melodramatic style. "I will have r-revenge!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Revenge! I will have——"

"You'll have that," said Nugent, tossing a turf into the water, and catching the German under his fat chin.

Herr Starkekase sank once more gracefully out of sight.

He came floundering up, and scrambled up the opposite side of the wide ditch. There was a hedge on that side, with a crumbling muddy bank, and it was not easy to get up; but Herr Starkekase had either to negotiate that hedge, or to remain in the ditch. He tackled the hedge.

With a great deal of grunting, and gasping, and floundering, and tearing and scratching, he forced his way through the hedge, and scrambled into the field on the other side.

The juniors gasped with merriment. It was so utterly ridiculous an end to the swank of the Anarchist that they could not help it. A melodramatic villain seldom had a more comic exit.

"I think he's had a lesson, anyway," Mark Linley observed. "He won't be in a hurry to come round Greyfriars again."

"Rather not," grinned Bob Cherry.

Harry Wharton looked very thoughtful. As a matter of fact, he did not think that Herr Starkekase would be got rid of so easily. But he did not say so. The prince was leaning against one of the old stone pillars of the gate, laughing heartily. He could evidently see only the comic side of the matter.

"Ach! It is to laugh—it is to laugh very much!" Prince Otto exclaimed. "It is the long farewell to the Herr Starkekase, I think, my young friends. He has had the valuable lesson."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The juniors went in, and Gosling locked the gates. Prince Otto linked his arm familiarly in Harry Wharton's.

"You like that I stay with you till you go to your bed," he remarked. "I think it is what you English call the jolly good."

Wharton smiled.

"Come into the common-room, your Highness," he said. "I don't know that you'll find us amusing, but we shall be very pleased to have you."

"Yes, rather, sir."

"I come with the pleasure, my young friends."

The term "young friends" made the juniors smile. As a matter of fact, Prince Otto seemed to them considerably younger than themselves in some things.

They strolled up to the School House, and found Fisher T. Fish on the steps, waiting for them. The moment the American junior caught sight of the prince, his cap came off as if of its own accord.

"Your Royal Highness!" he exclaimed. "Good-evening, your Majesty! I hope your Imperial Greatness is well this evening."

"Oh, cheese it, ass!" said Harry Wharton.

"Your Imperial Majesty——"

"This way, Prince Otto."

"I follow you."

And Harry Wharton led the Prince of Kaltebad into the junior common-room, Fisher T. Fish following, as if de-

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lighted to tread in the princely footsteps, and still murmuring in a dazed sort of way, "highness, majesty," and similar words.

THE FIFTEENTH CHAPTER.

The Leap of the Frog.

THE junior common-room was pretty well crowded. Most of the fellows had finished their prep., and were having a chat in the common-room before bedtime. The Remove were nearly all there, and most of the Upper Fourth, and a strong contingent of the Third and the Second. Forms above the Upper Fourth frequented the senior room, and turned up their noses at the junior apartment. The entrance of the prince into the room was greeted with a buzz.

Prince Otto looked round him with a genial smile. He was curious to know how the Greyfriars fellows amused themselves in the evening. Most of the fellows were talking, and the room was filled with a hum of voices. Some of them played chess and draughts, and some oiled their cricket-bats. Billy Bunter was seated in a corner with a bag of jam-tarts, slowly and methodically working his way through them. The fat junior had evidently raised a loan from somewhere. Bulstrode, as captain of the Remove, felt it incumbent upon him to come forward and greet the prince.

"Welcome, your Highness!" he said.

The prince bowed.

"You are very good," he said. "You play the game here, I suppose?"

Bulstrode looked a little puzzled.

"Well, we always try to play the game," he said.

"Which game?"

"Eh?"

"Here which game is it that you play with yourselves?" asked the prince.

Bulstrode laughed.

"Oh, I see! Oh, anything—leap-frog, sometimes."

"Leap-frog! What is that?"

"It's a jolly good game," said Skinner, joining in. "If your Imperial and Serene Greatness would care to learn, we should be happy and honoured to instruct."

"Yes, rather!" said Vernon-Smith eagerly. "Let's have a game. The prefects can't say anything about making a row when we have the prince here with us."

"Hear, hear!"

The prince gave them a genial look.

"I am to be most happy to learn!" he exclaimed. "It is the delight to me to study your British amusement games."

Wharton gave Skinner a look. Leap-frog was scarcely the game to propose to a princely visitor, and Wharton knew that Skinner and his friends meant ragging, if they could manage it. But the prince was evidently eager to learn the new and mysterious game, and Wharton did not feel that he could say anything in objection, but he managed to drop a whisper to Skinner.

"No larks, Skinny."

Skinner chuckled.

"Oh, of course not!" he said. "I'm going to be as grave as a judge, and as solemn as an undertaker. I always am, ain't I?"

"Look here——"

"I'm coming," said Skinner, in answer to an imaginary call. And he turned away before Harry Wharton could say any more.

"You shall instruct me in the game," the prince said. "It is called, you say, the leap of frog."

"That's it."

"You play, perhaps, with the bat and the ball, the same as the cricket?"

"Ha, ha! No. We play it just as we are," Skinner explained. "Shove those tables back, you chaps, and make a clear path from the door to the wall."

"Right-ho!"

The juniors eagerly cleared a long path from end to end of the long room. They were always keen for leap-frog in the common-room, but as a rule any loud amusement of that sort brought down upon them the wrath of the prefects. But with the prince playing, even the prefects of the Sixth could hardly say a word. The juniors were in the unique position of being able to make as much noise as they pleased without the danger of being called over the coals.

Skinner had taken upon himself the office of instructor to the prince. He led the Highness of Kaltebad out into the middle of the room.

"Now, tuck in your tuppenny!" he exclaimed.

The prince stared.

"What?"

"Tuck in your tuppenny, please!" said Skinner.

"But I do not understand," said the prince, in amazement. "How is it that you shall tuck in the tuppenny?"

"Ha, ha, ha!" roared the juniors.

"Perhaps it is to laugh," he said; "but it is that I do not yet understand the rules of the game."

"Let me show you, sir," said Skinner.

"Thank you so much!"

"You bend down like so, and tuck your head in so, and stay like that."

"Ach! For what?"

"Till we've jumped over you."

"Himmel!"

"When the other fellow's jumped over you, he bends down and tucks in his tuppenny, and you jump over him."

"Ach!"

"You understand?"

"Yes; I think that it is to me clear."

"Then tuck in your tuppenny!"

"Ach! What a wonderful language is the English, so full of surprises!" said the prince. "My English tutor in Kaltebad never even to me mentioned that expression. It is, perhaps, that he was not thoroughly educated."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prince obediently bent down as he had seen Skinner do. He struck the correct attitude at once. There was no doubt that Prince Otto was a young man with intelligence.

Skinner backed away to give a run and a jump. The humorist of the Remove winked to his friends. Instead of clearing the prince by putting his hands on his back and jumping over, he intended to come down astride of the prince's back, and bring Prince Otto with a terrific bump to the floor. That was Skinner's idea of a joke.

But the greatest jokers sometimes find their schemes work out incorrectly. Skinner stayed a moment too long calculating his jump. When he ran and jumped, the prince was tired of waiting, and he was rising from his bent attitude to see whether Skinner was coming.

The prince rose just as Skinner jumped.

There was a wild yell from Skinner, and he went floundering backwards to the floor, where he landed with a loud and echoing bump.

Bump!

"Yaroo!"

The Removites burst into a roar. Skinner's little joke working out this way seemed to them irresistibly comic—and so it was, for all but Skinner. Skinner failed to see where the laugh came in.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Ach!" exclaimed the prince, looking down at the groaning Skinner in great concern. "Is it that it is my fault that my young friend has fallen?"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"You shouldn't have got up," grinned Bulstrode.

"Ach! I am very sorry."

"Ow, ow, ow!"

"Is my young friend hurt?"

"No," said Bob Cherry. "He's doing that for fun."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton helped Skinner up, and pushed him out of the way.

"Serve you jolly well right, for your rotten trick," he whispered to him. "If you start anything of the sort again, you'll get a dot in the eye, so look out."

Skinner only groaned. He was not in a state to play any tricks, or to play anything else just at present. He was aching all over from the violent contact with the floor.

"You have to stay down till you're jumped over, your Highness," said Wharton. "If you care to play—"

"Oh, I shall like to! I will remember now."

"Good!"

And the whole crowd of juniors joined in the game, following one another up and down the long room in a double row, with shouts of laughter and enjoyment. Wingate, of the Sixth, came to the door, looking rather excited, but as soon as he saw the prince in the crowd of merry-makers he retreated without saying a word. Two or three other prefects looked in, and departed speechless. The game went on with the greatest enjoyment, and with ever-increasing din.

Suddenly a horrified voice was heard at the door. A fat form almost filled up the doorway from side to side, and Herr Baron Rotenaugen blinked into the room through the pinca-nez perched upon his fat nose.

"Ach! Mein prinz!"

And the great chamberlain of the Court of Kaltebad staggered against the doorway, almost fainting at the sight of the Kronprinz playing leap-frog with the juniors, and tucking in his tuppenny like any Third-Form fag.

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THE SIXTEENTH CHAPTER.

Wharton's Idea.

HERR BARON ROTENAUEN very nearly fainted, but he managed to support himself.

"Mein prinz! Mein prinz!"

The prince looked round.

"Ach! Herr baron! Komm in! Komm and play the leap of the frog!"

"Himmel!"

"Komm and play with us, my dear baron—mein lieber baron! Komm!"

"Ach!"

The prince, with a gleam of mischief in his blue eyes, grasped the baron by the arm, and whirled him into the room.

Herr Rotenaugen gasped for breath.

"Ach, ach! Oh! Ach!"

"Now, lean down—"

"Ach!"

"And tuck in your tuppenny!"

"Ach, ach!"

"Go it!" shouted Bulstrode.

The baron, almost fainting with surprise and horror, leaned mechanically as the prince pushed him, and the juniors took flying leaps over him. It was the first time that the Lord High Chancellor of the Court of Kaltebad had ever played leap-frog, and probably it would be the last. And he did not enjoy it now, but he seemed to have no choice. As fast as one junior cleared him, another came dashing on; and at last came the prince—the Kronprinz himself—leaping over his chamberlain's back.

"Himmel!" moaned the baron. "It is a dream that I have—a dream of horror—what the British call the mare of the night!"

"Go it!"

"Play up!"

"Hurrah!"

Mr. Quelch, the master of the Remove, came to the door of the junior common-room. The Lower Fourth Form-master looked very heated.

"Boys!" he shouted. "This noise—"

Then he broke off.

The sight of the Crown Prince and his Lord High Chamberlain playing leap-frog with the juniors took Mr. Quelch's breath away.

"Oh!" he murmured. "Ah! Oh!"

And he hastily retreated.

"Ach!" groaned Herr Rotenaugen. "Ach! I am daze—I am bewildered!"

"Bed-time, you kids!" said Courtney, of the Sixth, coming in. "Sorry to interrupt, but you're ten minutes late already."

"Oh, buzz off, Courtney, old man!"

"Give us a rest!"

"We're playing with the prince."

"None of your blessed democracy here, Courtney! Respect for the Royal blood," said Bulstrode. "Can't you see the prince?"

Courtney laughed. The prince, rather breathlessly, laughed, too, and shook his head.

"No; you must not stay up for me!" he exclaimed. "I have enjoyed the game immense, and I shall always remember this jolly good game. But go to bed now with yourselves."

"Ach!" groaned Herr Rotenaugen.

"My chamberlain desires to thank you for the good sport you have given him," said the prince, with a twinkle in his eye.

"Ach!"

"Thank your young friends, Herr Baron. Do not give them a poor idea of the courtesy of the people of Kaltebad," whispered the prince.

Baron Rotenaugen groaned.

"Ich danke ihnen," he mumbled. "I thank you very much indeed with myself for the good sport of the game of leap the frog. Ach!"

"Hurrah!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

And the chamberlain, gasping for breath, and looking considerably dishevelled, quitted the common-room, leaning heavily on the arm of the prince.

"Good-night, sir!" shouted the juniors.

"Good-night, my young friends! Good-night to you all!"

"Good-night, your Highness!" said Fisher T. Fish, following the prince into the passage to catch the last possible glimpse of his princely person. "Good-night, your Majesty! I hope your Highness will sleep well. I hope your Imperial Greatness will be quite comfy. I hope your majestic Majesty—"

But there the American junior had to stop, as Bob Cherry clapped a hand, of considerable size, over his mouth.

"Ow!" gasped Fisher T. Fish. "Yow! I guess—"

"Shut up, ass!"

"Off to bed with you!" said Courtney, good humouredly, "You're late! Hurry up, or I shall warm you!"

And the juniors crowded up to the Remove dormitory, laughing and chuckling. The game in the common-room had been very enjoyable, and, under the circumstances, there was no ragging from the prefects to fear.

But the thoughtful look returned to Harry Wharton's face as he undressed to go to bed. He could not help thinking of the Anarchist Starkekase, and the deadly enmity he had shown towards the Prince of Kaltebad.

"What are you thinking about, Harry?" Frank Nugent asked, as he kicked his boots off.

"Starkekase."

"You don't think he'll come back?"

Wharton nodded.

"Look here," he said, in a low voice, "it seems that the Anarchist party in the prince's own country are at daggers drawn with the government there, and they want to hold the prince as a sort of hostage to make terms. They've gone to all the trouble and expense of chartering a steamer to pursue him at sea, now he's come to England for the Coronation, and even after he's got here, Starkekase is hanging round the place. That German chap is a brute, but he's very keen, and my belief is that he's found out all there is to learn—that the prince is only here for one night, and that the soldiers will come down from London to-morrow to see him safe to Buckingham Palace."

"Very likely. But—"

"Well, I hear that they're sending down some Scots Guards to take him to London, and as soon as the escort comes, Starkekase's chance will be up."

Nugent grinned.

"I rather think so," he agreed. "I can't imagine those German Anarchists tackling the Scots Guards."

"Well, then, to-night is Starkekase's last chance," said Harry Wharton quietly. "Do you think, after all the trouble he and his gang have taken—and the expense they must have gone to—he will let Prince Otto get to London without one more attempt to get hold of him? Unless he wanted to have another try to kidnap him, why was he so keen to know whether the prince was staying at the school or not?"

"Quite so. But—"

"I believe there will be an attempt to-night."

Nugent whistled.

"Better speak to the Head about it, then. There ought to be some sort of a watch kept, Harry."

"That's what I was thinking of. Are you game?"

"I? Oh, I see! Certainly," said Nugent, with a grin.

"We'll mount guard over the prince's door, if you like."

"That's what I mean—you and I, and two or three others could slip out of the dorm. quietly, after lights out, and look out for the scoundrels, after the prince has gone to bed."

"I'm game."

"Then it's settled."

"Wherefore this mysterious confab?" said Bob Cherry, looking at Harry. "Wherefore that wrinkled brow of thought, my son?"

Wharton explained.

"I'm on," said Bob, at once. "We three, and Johnny Bull, can keep watch, without a word to any of the others. We can take some cricket-stumps in case we need them. I should rather like to stump that black-bearded chap."

"Good."

John Bull willingly agreed to join. The juniors went to bed without saying anything more about it. But Harry Wharton did not sleep. The danger, to his mind, was a very real one; and it would have been useless to speak to Prince Otto himself about it. The prince was too careless and light-hearted, and despised the Anarchists too thoroughly, to think of taking precautions.

But with four juniors on the watch, the German Anarchists were not likely to be able to kidnap the prince from within the walls of Greyfriars.

Courtney saw lights out, and the juniors were soon asleep, with the exception of Harry Wharton. He remained awake, listening to the clock as it rang out the quarters and the hours.

Eleven o'clock! Half-past eleven!

Wharton rose silently from bed, and slipped on his clothes. The Remove dormitory was buried in silence and slumber.

By half-past eleven all Greyfriars, as a rule, was in bed. Wharton meant to be on the watch outside the prince's door by midnight.

He awoke the other fellows quietly, and Bob Cherry and Nugent and John Bull turned out without a word, and dressed themselves.

They left the Remove dormitory without awakening any of the other fellows, and Harry Wharton closed the door softly.

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ONE
PENNY.

"You know where the prince is?" Nugent whispered.

"Yes, I made Trotter show me his room. It's at the end of the passage into the Head's house—the Blue-room."

"Good! Starkekase couldn't get in at the window of that room, even if he knew it—it's a sheer drop of thirty feet to the ground."

"Yes. I expect the Head had that in view when he chose it for the prince. And we shall be on the watch outside the door."

"I'll get the cricket-stumps out of the study," whispered Bull.

"Good!"

John Bull slipped into the Remove passage, and brought four cricket stumps from No. 14. He rejoined the others, and they made their way to the prince's room.

All Greyfriars was dark and silent. The prince had gone to bed. Whether his Lord High Chamberlain slept in the same room, the juniors did not know; but in case of an attack from the Anarchists, Herr Baron Rotenagen was not likely to be of much use, in any case.

"Quiet!" said Wharton.

"Who's making a row?" asked Bob Cherry.

"Rats! If the prince hears you, he may think it's the Anarchists—"

"Better not talk, then," suggested John Bull.

"Fathead!"

The juniors took up their stand outside the door of the prince's room, in the wide, dark passage. At the end of the passage a window glimmered in the moonlight. Midnight rang out from the clock-tower.

THE SEVENTEENTH CHAPTER.

Guarding the Prince.

MIDNIGHT!

Greyfriars slept!

In the vast pile of the old school, there were only four wakeful—the four juniors who kept watch and ward over the prince's room.

An hour dragged by slowly.

John Bull leaned against the wall and nodded. Nugent yawned. Bob Cherry closed his eyes, and jerked them open again, and closed them again. Harry Wharton stood like a soldier on guard.

"My word!" Nugent murmured drowsily. "What asses we were not to bring camp-stools!"

"Sit on the floor," suggested John Bull.

"I think I will. Of course," said Nugent, "I'm not going to sleep."

"I think I'll sit down, too," Bob Cherry remarked thoughtfully. "Of course, I shan't close my eyes."

"It's easier to keep watch sitting down," John Bull remarked, in a reflective sort of way. "Don't you think so, Wharton?"

Wharton smiled.

"No," he said.

"Well, I think I'll try it."

"Oh, yes, rather!"

"Same here."

And Nugent, and Bull, and Bob Cherry sat down, and leaned back against the wall of the passage, and in a few minutes nodded off to sleep. Wharton remained standing, as firm as a rock. Wharton was the son of a soldier, and he had many of a soldier's qualities. He stood and kept his eyes open, watching and waiting.

Boom!

It was the stroke of one from the clock-tower.

Nugent started and opened his eyes, and rubbed them drowsily.

"Hallo!" he whispered. "Anything up?"

"No."

"I thought I heard something."

"It was the clock striking," said Harry.

"Oh! Have you been asleep?"

"No."

"I haven't, either," said Nugent slumberously. "I just closed my eyes for a minute, but not what you'd call going to sleep."

"It's all right, I'll call you if there's an alarm."

Nugent sniffed.

"I don't want calling; I suppose I can keep watch as well as anybody can, can't I?"

"Hush!"

"Rats!"

Wharton did not speak again. Frank had evidently awakened in an argumentative mood. Nugent closed his eyes again—for another few minutes, which lasted half an hour.

Harry Wharton waited, with all his senses on the alert.

He was convinced that there would be some attempt on the part of the German Anarchists to enter Greyfriars during the night, to kidnap the prince.

The thought was not out of his mind for a moment; and he was keen, alert, wakeful, when two o'clock struck.

Still there had been no alarm.

If the Anarchists were coming, they were leaving it very late to make certain. The later they left it, the safer it would be for them—unless it was left too late.

Three o'clock!

Wharton's eyes were heavy; but he did not close them. The other three fellows were sleeping soundly. John Bull had stretched at full length on the floor, with his head on his arm. Bob Cherry and Nugent sat with their chins sunken upon their breasts, breathing steadily.

Wharton was still alert.

And his patience was rewarded. A few minutes after the striking of the hour, there was a sound in the dead stillness of the night.

Creak!

It was but a faint sound.

But it was sufficient to send the blood thrilling to Harry Wharton's heart. It was not the sound of the wind in the old elms, or of a rat scuttling behind the wainscot.

It was a sound from the great window at the end of the passage.

Wharton fastened his eyes upon the wide uncurtained glass.

Outside, the moon was glimmering, and the branches of the elms were patterned in shadow on the panes.

Another shadow dimmed the glass.

It was the shadow of a man's head.

Wharton's heart beat like a hammer.

He bent down and touched the sleeping juniors. Bob Cherry gave an inarticulate grunt, and Nugent murmured softly:

"Gerrouit! 'Tain't rising-bell!"

"Wake up!" whispered Wharton.

"Hallo, hallo, hallo!"

"Quiet!"

"What's the row?"

"The Anarchists."

"Phew!"

The juniors were awake in a moment.

They rose to their feet. There was a curious clicking sound, and the window opened. A dark form leaped through into the house.

"My hat!" murmured Bob Cherry.

"They're coming!"

"More than one, by gum!"

Another form followed the first.

"Let's rush them, Harry——"

"Quiet!"

"But——"

"Quiet! We're quite in the dark here," whispered Wharton. "Wait till they pass us, and then we'll go for them suddenly and take them by surprise. They're on the look-out now, and they may have revolvers for all we know."

"Phew!"

"Good!" murmured Nugent.

The two dark forms remained inside the window for several whole minutes listening. They were evidently ready to take alarm at a sound.

The juniors remained quite still, hardly daring to breathe.

Outside the prince's door the passage was intensely dark; the juniors could barely see each other, and it was quite certain that they could not be seen by the men at the window.

They waited with beating hearts.

The thought had occurred to Harry Wharton quite late that the Anarchists might be armed, and they might use their weapons, but the juniors did not falter. They grasped the cricket stumps harder and waited.

Evidently there were only two of the Anarchists. No one else came in at the open window. From the fat figure, and a glimmer of spectacles in the moonlight, the juniors knew that one of them was Starkekase, the Anarchist chief.

Five minutes passed.

Starkekase and his companion were listening intently, but there was no sound in the silence of the great house, and they were satisfied that their entrance had been unheard and undetected.

They came quietly along the passage, with creeping footsteps.

Wharton nudged his comrades.

"Ready?" he muttered.

"What-ho!"

"Yes, rather!"

"Hush!"

The Anarchists had paused.

They might have heard some sound, but if so they were

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soon reassured, for they came creeping on again along the dark passage.

Did they know which was the prince's room, or were they merely exploring to discover? The juniors did not know or care—the scoundrels were almost within reach, that was all that Harry Wharton & Co. thought about.

The dark forms loomed up in the gloom. There was a hissing breath from Starkekase; he had caught sight of a shadow in the darkness. But he had no time to back away or to draw a weapon. Wharton gave a shout.

"Sock it to them!"

And the four juniors dashed forward, lashing out with the cricket stumps.

THE EIGHTEENTH CHAPTER.

Catching the Anarchist.

"ACH!"
"Himmel!"
Crash!

Starkekase fell with a crash to the floor, and the other German backed away, putting up his hands to protect his head.

Not an instant's respite was allowed to the rascals.

A second's space and a revolver might have cracked out in the passage, and the life of one of the boys might have paid for ill-timed mercy.

They lashed furiously with the cricket stumps, and Starkekase yelled and struggled as Wharton and Bob Cherry seized him.

The other man retreated fast along the passage, gasping, with John Bull and Nugent lashing at him mercilessly.

He reached the window and flung himself out of it, and the juniors heard the ivy crackle and groan under the strain of his weight.

He was gone.

Starkekase was still struggling furiously, and Wharton's voice was calling for help. John Bull and Nugent dashed back to his aid.

Crack!

A flash lit up the darkness of the passage.

"Good heavens!" cried Nugent. "The scoundrel!"

He hurled himself upon the Anarchist, striking furiously.

Starkekase groaned, and lay limply on the floor.

"Wharton, are you hit?"

"No."

"Bob——"

"I'm all right."

Nugent gasped with relief.

"Thank Heaven! He missed, then."

"I had his wrist," said Wharton quietly. "The bullet's in the floor, but the scoundrel meant murder."

"Collar him!"

Wharton was wrenching the revolver from the Anarchist's hand. He got it away, and flung it into the darkness.

There was a loud exclamation from the prince's room, and the sound of someone leaping out of bed. Then an imploring voice:

"Your Highness! There may be danger."

"Let me go."

"But there is danger——"

"That is why I am going."

"I implore your Highness——"

"Stuff!"

The prince's door flew open, and a flood of electric light swept out into the passage, illuminating the startling scene.

The four juniors were struggling furiously with the Anarchist.

Disarmed, and half stunned as he was, Starkekase was resisting desperately, and as the prince came running out the Anarchist broke away.

He dashed furiously down the passage towards the open window.

But before he could reach the window a door opened between him and the end of the passage, and Mr. Prout, the master of the Fifth, came out.

Mr. Prout at once blocked the path of the Anarchist, and Starkekase paused. The prince and the juniors were close behind.

With a despairing look the ruffian turned into a side passage, and raced away in the darkness—he knew not whither.

"After him!" panted Wharton.

"Ach! Seize him!" yelled the prince. "It is the leader of the Anarchists!"

"After him!"

They rushed in pursuit. The prince touched Wharton's arm.

"Where does this passage lead?" he gasped.

"To the box-room stairs," panted back Wharton. "He can't get out, unless he jumps from a window."

"We've got him!" gasped Bob Cherry.

Patter, patter, patter!

Bump!

The passage ended in a staircase. The Anarchist had rushed upon the stairs in the darkness and fallen there. There was a loud cry of pain and rage, and then the sound of swift footsteps up the stairs.

"After him!"

"Lights—bring lights!"

"This way!"

By this time all Greyfriars was alarmed and awakened. Fellows came out of all the dormitories, half dressed and startled, yelling out to know what was the matter.

"Burglars!"

"The Anarchists!"

"Phone for the police!"

"Put the lights on!"

"This way!"

Harry Wharton & Co. rushed up the box-room stairs with the prince. At the top of the narrow stair the Anarchist turned at bay.

His furious face looked down at the crowding juniors. The electric lights gleamed behind them, and gleamed upon the savage face of the German.

"Back!" he shouted.

It was fortunate for all concerned that the man had lost his revolver. He had no weapons, but he stood with gnashing teeth and clenched fists.

"Back!"

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry cheerfully. "Come on, you fellows!"

"Collar him!"

"Ach! Follow me!" shouted the prince.

"Hurrah!"

There was a desperate rush up the stairs.

The Anarchist faltered and turned, and dashed into a box-room, slamming the door behind him. He groped for the key, but no key was there.

The next moment the whooping juniors burst the door open and rushed in after him.

The German was at the window, tearing it open. Outside was a sheer drop of at least sixty feet, and the Anarchist's nerve failed him. It was death to jump out; it was capture to remain. He turned upon the pursuers, and made a desperate rush to break his way out of the room.

But the juniors closed upon him in a crowd.

Prince Otto sprang right at him and grasped him, and they closed, and rolled over on the floor.

"Ach! Ach!"

"I have him!"

"Lay hold!" shouted Harry Wharton.

"What-ho!"

"Got him!"

"Hurrah!"

The juniors piled on recklessly. The prince was crushed down upon the Anarchist, and he gasped as much as the Anarchist did, as all breath was bumped out of his body. Blows were being rained on all sides, but the Anarchist, though he received a good many, certainly did not get all of them.

There were roars and howls from the juniors.

"Ow!"

"Mind my nose, you fathead!"

"Gerrout! Lemme alone! Yow!"

"Gerroff my neck!"

"Yaroo!"

Mr. Quelch came in at the door at the head of a crowd of fellows.

"We've got him, sir!" shouted Bob Cherry jubilantly.

"Hero he is, sir!"

"We've collared the cad!"

The prince staggered up. Starkekase was lying breathless and helpless, too winded by the terrific struggle to make another movement, but five or six juniors grasped various parts of him to make sure.

Mr. Quelch looked sternly at the gasping, exhausted Anarchist.

"Who is this man?" he asked.

"It's the Anarchist, sir."

"Chap named Starkekase, sir," said Harry Wharton. "He was the chap who followed Prince Otto's yacht in the big steamer, and ran the yacht on the rocks in Pegg Bay."

"Oh! I understand!"

"Ach! Release me!" panted the Anarchist.

Bob Cherry chuckled.

"You don't get released, my beauty, till the police come," he said.

"No fear!"

"Hold the villain securely," said Mr. Quelch. "The Head is telephoning to the police-station now. I hope your Highness is not hurt?"

The prince gasped for breath.

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ONE
PENNY.

"Not at all," he panted. "A—a—a little out of breath, that is all. But I am not hurt. This villain came here to kidnap me, certainly."

"And you awakened—"

"I was wakened by the struggle outside my door, mein Herr."

"We collared the brute, sir," Harry Wharton explained.

The Remove-master looked curiously at Harry Wharton.

"And may I ask you how you came to be so far from your dormitory at such an hour of the night, Wharton?" he said. The junior coloured.

"Well, you—you see, sir—"

"You—you see, sir—" began Bob Cherry.

"Yes, sir," said John Bull, "you—you see—"

"I am afraid I do not quite see," replied the Remove-master.

"Well, sir, we—we suspected that the giddy Anarchists might come in the night," blurted out Wharton; "and we—we took the liberty of keeping watch outside the prince's room, sir, so as to see him safe till morning."

"Oh, indeed?"

"I hope we haven't done wrong, sir?" said Wharton meekly. "You see, sir, we felt quite sure the rotter would come—and he has come, sir."

Mr. Quelch smiled.

"I am not likely to blame you, under the circumstances, Wharton. You have acted very well. And as for this villain, he will be handed over to the police. I was awakened by a shot. This man fired it, I presume?"

"Yes, sir—when we were struggling with him."

"Then he will be charged with attempted murder," said the Remove-master, "and I think he will get a sentence which will keep him out of mischief for a long time to come. Bring him downstairs. Stay! Tie his hands together first, in case he should attempt to give any further trouble."

"Yes, sir."

The growling, grunting ruffian, too exhausted to resist, was bound, his wrists being firmly secured together, and then the juniors marched him out of the room, and marched him downstairs in triumph.

There he was locked in a room, with half a dozen seniors to guard him, till the police should arrive.

It was not long before three constables arrived from Friar-dale, and they took charge of the German Anarchist.

He was driven away from the school in the Head's trap, with the handcuffs on his wrists, and lodged in the police-station—his attempts at mischief completely stopped till after—long after—the Coronation, at all events.

And then the juniors went back to bed, very well satisfied with themselves and with the way things had gone.

THE NINETEENTH CHAPTER.

A Royal Command.

GREYFRIARS was in a state of considerable excitement the next morning.

Prince Otto of Kaltebad was to leave the school that morning under escort of the Scots Guards, a detachment of whom were to arrive early and conduct the King's guest to Buckingham Palace.

Prince Otto breakfasted with the Head, and afterwards he joined the juniors. The fat chamberlain attended him like a shadow. Herr Baron Rotenaugen did not mean to let his precious prince out of his sight again, at all events, until he was safely lodged in the Royal palace in London.

Herr Rotenaugen had wired off news of the attempted kidnapping to London, and the morning papers were certain to be full of it. And a chief item in the news was likely to be the conduct of the juniors at Greyfriars.

Whether the desperate attempt of the Anarchists would have succeeded if the juniors had not been on the watch could not be said; but certainly Starkekase and his companion would have had a chance of success.

Now Herr Starkekase was left to consider himself in a prison cell, there to meditate upon the error of his ways; and not to leave it till he was taken to London to stand his trial for attempted murder and kidnapping.

But no one thought of the disappointed and baffled Anarchist now.

It was known through the school that lessons were not to begin that day until after the departure of the prince, and the juniors rejoiced in their unaccustomed freedom.

The soldiers arrived at last.

All Greyfriars gathered in the Close to see a dozen men of the stalwart Scots Guards march in at the gates.

Loudly they cheered the big, handsome Guardsmen as they marched in.

Then, for the first time, Herr Baron Rotenauzen seemed to breathe freely. The Lord High Chamberlain of Kaltebad had seemed to fear another attempt in broad daylight to carry off his beloved prince. He saw a foe in every bush, and an Anarchist behind every corner.

But even the fat baron was satisfied now.

The word was passed round that the prince wished to speak to the school before he left, and the Forms were gathered in the Hall to hear him.

Prince Otto appeared with a stalwart Scots Guardsman on either side of him. Herr Baron Rotenauzen had insisted upon it. He did not mean to leave anything to chance.

The Greyfriars fellows greeted the appearance of the prince with a loud cheer.

Prince Otto bowed.

"I wish to say a few words——"

"Hear, hear!"

"Just a few words of thanks——"

"Hear, hear!"

"I have been receive into the noble hospitality of your school in the hour of danger," said the prince. "I owe my safety especially to some of the young boys—and most especially to Harry Wharton."

"Bravo, Wharton!"

"Hurrah!"

"I thank all the school, and most especially I thank my young friend Wharton——"

"Hear, hear!"

"I have this morning receive a message from your King—your great and noble King George the Fifth——"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

"God save the King!"

"He have ask me to bring my young friend to London with me, that he may thank him in person for having save the life of his guest."

"Hurrah!"

Wharton started.

He had not expected anything of the sort, and he was startled and amazed—and dismayed. He stood crimson and dumb.

"I have the permission of the noble Head to take Harry Wharton to the Palace of Buckingham with me," said the prince, "to receive the noble thanks of the great and kind King George the Fifth."

"Hurrah!"

"Bravo!"

"Buck up, Wharton!"

"You lucky dog!" shouted Bob Cherry, with a powerful dig in Harry Wharton's ribs that made him stagger.

"Ow!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Some chaps have all the luck!" said Bulstrode. "Never mind! Go it, Wharton, and tell us what the King says when you come back."

"Yes, rather! Go it, Wharton!"

"I—I don't want to go!" gasped Wharton. "I—I didn't do anything more than the others. I—I'd rather not go."

"I guess I'll go instead of you, if you like," said Fisher T. Fish instantly. "It ain't every chap that has a chance of talking to a king, Gum, but wouldn't they make a lot of me when I told 'em in New York!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prince came down to Wharton and took his arm.

"Come, my young friend," he said.

"B-b-but——"

"You must come with me."

"But, sir——"

"It is the command of your King."

Wharton groaned.

"I—I suppose I must go, then," he said. "Of course, I represent the other chaps. I didn't do more than the rest."

"Rats!" said Bob Cherry. "You fished his Highness out, and you thought of keeping watch last night. It was all your game from start to finish—we only fielded."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"I guess I'll go——"

"We guess you won't!"

"Ha, ha, ha!"

The prince walked out to the Head's carriage, with Wharton's arm in his.

All Greyfriars gathered to cheer as the carriage rolled away to the railway-station, with the Scots Guards in attendance. And Wharton, very red and very confused, drove off with the prince to visit Buckingham Palace and to see the King—and to be thanked in person by King George the Fifth.

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THE TWENTIETH CHAPTER.

The King.

HARRY WHARTON felt like a fellow in a dream as he sat in a handsome car, by the side of the prince, with the fat Chamberlain of Kaltebad opposite, rolling towards Buckingham Palace, with Scots Guards riding before and behind.

London was gay with the decorations for the Coronation; in the bright June weather the streets were gay with flags and bunting, and thronged with cheerful and cheering crowds.

London was looking its best, and all the huge crowds in the streets were in the best of humours, ready to cheer anything or anybody at a moment's notice.

The Royal motor-car had met the party from Greyfriars at Charing Cross, and the prince had made the shy junior take a seat beside him in the car.

Wharton was, as a rule, quite cool and self-possessed; but even his coolness was a little overcome by what was happening to him now.

Prince Otto was kindness itself.

"You need not be afraid, my dear young friend," he said. "I have seen your King before, and he is one of the kindest of gentlemen. You will be at your ease the moment you have seen him."

Wharton nodded.

But he did not think that he would be at his ease in the presence of the King, amid the crowds of courtiers and guards and foreign notabilities.

The Royal car in the streets attracted a great deal of attention, and there were loud cheers for the occupants.

Few knew whom they were; but the troops riding by the car showed that it contained personages of importance, and the genial Londoners were ready to cheer any of the foreign princes and ambassadors who were gathering to do honour to the King of Great Britain and Ireland.

"Hurrah!"

"Hip, hip, hurrah!"

Wharton smiled as the cheers rang on his ears. He heard conjectures raised among the crowd as to whom he might be. Some suggested that he was Prince Eddy, others rather fancied the theory that he was the youngest son of the Kaiser, while still others took him to be an Italian prince or a Russian duke.

But, whatever he was, they were willing to cheer.

And perhaps their cheering would not have been any the less hearty if they had known him for what he was—a brave, honourable British schoolboy, who had risked his life to save that of a stranger, and whom, therefore, their King delighted to honour.

The palace at last!

Harry Wharton hardly saw where he went or what he did. He only knew that the prince kept a hold upon his arm, and was his guide and his friend.

He stopped in an ante-room, and the prince whispered to him.

"Pull yourself together, my young friend!"

"Ye-es. What——"

"You are about to see the King."

"The King!" gasped Harry.

"Yes; in a moment more."

Wharton drew a deep breath.

After all, why should he be frightened—why should he be nervous? King George the Fifth was King of Great Britain and Ireland, Emperor of India, and Lord of dominions upon which the sun never sets, but at heart he was simply an upright, kindly British gentleman, of whom no one need be afraid—unless, indeed, he had done wrong.

Wharton calmed himself.

An official glided from the adjoining chamber, and spoke in a low tone to the prince.

Prince Otto took Wharton's hand, and led him into the presence of his Majesty King George the Fifth.

Wharton knew the King at once. He had seen his portraits often enough for that. The Royal countenance was not strange to him. And all thoughts of being afraid, of being awkward and uneasy vanished from his mind as he saw the kind, generous face of the King.

King George made a gesture, and the lad advanced to him.

"This is the lad, your Majesty," said Prince Otto—"the brave schoolboy who twice saved me—once from death, and again from kidnapping."

"Come here, my lad," said the King. "Whoever serves a guest of the King of Great Britain serves his King. You have done well and bravely, my boy."

And the King held out his hand.

Wharton sank on his knees and kissed the hand of his King!

THE TWENTY-FIRST CHAPTER.

Fisher T. Fish Makes a Suggestion.

"WELL," said Prince Otto, ten minutes later, as he was saying good-bye to Harry Wharton outside the palace, "it was not so very terrible?" And he smiled.

Harry Wharton smiled, too.

"No, it was not," he said. "You were right, sir. I ought not to have been uneasy. But I had not seen the King then. Now—"

"Now you have seen him," laughed the prince, "what do you think?"

"I think I would die for him, sir," said Harry Wharton simply.

Prince Otto pressed his hand.

"No one could wish for a better death," he said. "Good-bye, my young friend—good-bye! I shall never forget what I owe you!"

"Good-bye, sir!"

The car roiled away. In a quarter of an hour more Harry Wharton was in the train speeding back to Greyfriars.

A crowd of Greyfriars fellows met him at Friardale Station. He had wired the time of his train, and they were packed on the platform to meet him.

There was a rush for his carriage as the train stopped.

"Here he is!" shouted Bob Cherry.

"Hurrah!"

"Here's Wharton!"

"Chuck him out!"

"I guess you're feeling A-1 and O.K.," remarked Fisher T. Fish. "What did the King look like?"

Wharton laughed.

"Had a good time, Harry?" asked Frank Nugent.

"Ripping!"

"Was the King nice?"

"Splendid!"

"How did he look?" persisted Fisher T. Fish. "What kind of clothes was he wearing?"

"Blessed if I know!"

"Thunder! By gum! Didn't you notice?"

"No."

"My hat! Did he have his crown on?"

"I didn't notice. I think not."

"You didn't notice?" said Fisher T. Fish, in measured tones. "You go and see a king—not a little German king, but a real English King—and you don't notice whether he's got a crown on or not?"

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"Not in the least."

"Ha, ha, ha!"

"Well, I guess—"

But words could not express to the full the feelings of a Republican on hearing that a being of any sort could be so inattentive to the details of Royalty. Fisher T. Fish concluded by simply snorting.

Wharton was marched home in triumph by an enthusiastic crowd. The Greyfriars fellows felt rightly enough that in honouring Wharton, King George had honoured the whole school. Greyfriars had, in effect, received the Royal recognition at the Coronation. That was what the fellows felt, and they were rather inclined to swank about it.

"But what was he like?" demanded Fisher T. Fish, finding his voice again at last. "How did he look?"

"Every inch a king!" said Harry Wharton.

"But what was he like?"

"Like!" repeated Harry Wharton thoughtfully. "He was like himself—a good and kind gentleman. There's no more than that to say."

"Hear, hear!"

"I guess—"

"Oh, cheese it, Fish! You're a lucky dog, Wharton! Did he shake hands with you?" asked Bob Cherry.

"I kissed his hand, and then he made me get up, and shook hands with me," said Harry Wharton.

Fisher T. Fish gasped.

"Shook hands with you?"

"Yes."

"Honest?"

"Of course, you ass!"

"Gee! If it was me, I'd wear a glove on that hand, and never wash it again as long as I lived!" said Fisher T. Fish.

"Ha, ha, ha!"

Harry Wharton did not go quite so far as that, but his interview with King George the Fifth remained one of the happiest and proudest recollections of his life, and certainly his Majesty never had a truer or more loyal subject than Harry Wharton, who had saved the life of the King's guest.

(Another splendid long, complete story of Harry Wharton & Co. next week, entitled "Bulstrode on the Warpath," by Frank Richards. Order your copy of the MAGNET in advance. Price One Penny.)

A NEW ADVENTURE TALE OF ABSORBING INTEREST!

LION AGAINST BEAR.

A Thrilling Story of the Further Amazing Adventures of
FERRERS LORD, MILLIONAIRE.
By **SIDNEY DREW.**

READ THIS FIRST

Rupert Thurston, friend of Ferrers Lord, the millionaire, and commander of the latter's wonderful submarine, the Lord of the Deep, receives mysterious orders to sail for the Chinese seas. While on the journey the engines break down, and Thurston and Horton the diver, while waiting for the repairs to be completed, rescue a mad castaway, who tells them a strange story. With the engine repaired they restart on the search for the Crimson Hill. But another, this time more serious, breakdown occurs, and they are forced to rise to the surface for air. When the repairs are finished they again start in search of the mysterious hill, with searchlights burning, slanting downwards and moving slowly round.

(Now go on with the story.)

A Successful Search is Made for the Entrance of the Cavern—The Interior of the Mysterious Cave—Ivan Scaroff and His Story.

The bottom of the sea was smooth white sand, and here and there great masses of sponges were growing. The vessel slid along over masses of dark weeds, and strange fish flitted past, staring at the weird monster that had invaded their realms. Suddenly Ching-Lung, who had eyes like a cat, bent forward. He remained motionless for an instant, peering into the glassy gloom, and then he turned to Horton.

"One sovereign, sir," he squeaked.

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NEXT TUESDAY: "BULSTRODE ON THE WARPATH." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"What!" cried the diver. "You haven't seen the hill?"

"You betee!" said Ching-Lung. "Dere it is!"

Horton had promised a sovereign to the man who first sighted the mysterious place. He could see nothing, and Rupert strained his eyes in vain. With a chuckle, Ching-Lung went to the speaking-tube.

"You justee stop dis ole tub a bitee," he squeaked, "or else we go bump!"

Thurston uttered a cry, and pointed forward.

"There it is!"

The searchlight shone crimson on something ahead. It was a long, low mass, rising some twenty fathoms into the water from a bed of golden sand. Two great flashing white eyes glared from its crimson sides.

"Watch well!" said Thurston.

The flashing eyes seemed to wink and twinkle.

"You betee de big-blained Chinese boy watchee him soveleign well!" squeaked Ching-Lung. "Thankee you, Mr. Holton. Me wantee dat yaller quid. He, he, he!"

Fascinated and excited, Rupert stared forward. The two great eyes of light ahead grew wider apart as the vessel moved slowly on. Their own searchlights showed that the colour of the hill was due to a thick growth of seaweed of

a blood-red hue. Then the flashing lights vanished, as if some great monster had closed its eyes.

"Christopher!" muttered Horton. "It's queer, sir. Creepy, isn't it?"

"By Jove, it is!" answered Rupert.

Ching-Lung tittered, and winked at Tom Prout. The steersman was looking a bit scared.

"Dat ole Davy Jones's palace," said the Chinese boy. "Me know allee 'bout it. Ole Davy takee de drowned sailors dere and eatee dem. You gotee go dere too, Thomas. It allee upes wid a man who see Davy Jones likee you. It a most tellible waining. You justee makee youl will, Tom. You just as good as deadee. He, he, he!"

"Oh, dear!" groaned the steersman. "You don't mean that?"

"I do," answered Ching-Lung, wiping away a tear. "Kiss me and say farewell."

Thurston gave a sudden order that ended the conversation. The screws were reversed, and the Lord of the Deep halted. The crimson weeds swayed, as if agitated by a breeze, as the vessel settled gently down beside the hill on a bed of yellow sand. Sailors crowded up, curious and excited.

"How many men had we better take, sir?" asked Horton.

"Oh, two will do! Bring Maddock and Ching-Lung, and leave Prout in command."

Tom Prout heaved a sigh of relief. He had no desire to explore the palace of Davy Jones. Diving-dresses were donned, and the four men entered the chamber. As the water filled it, Horton opened the outer door, and they stepped down upon the sand, switching on their lamps.

Rupert led the way, burning with curiosity and excitement. His first idea was to discover the origin of the mysterious lights. He began to scale the hill, and sank waist-deep into the weed. For a time he forced his way along, until the clammy, blood-red growth rose to his armpits. Another step, and it was up to his chin. He turned back.

Horton, who was behind him, touched him on the arm, and pointed back. Ching-Lung had followed. He was sitting on a stone at the base of the hill, among a pile of oysters. Rupert understood the diver's gestures. He wanted Ching-Lung to take the lead.

The Chinese boy grinned behind the glass of his helmet when Rupert signed to him what was wanted. Ben Maddock was still battling with the weeds, and groaning horribly, for he hated diving. Horton carried a slate and pencil. He wrote on the slate:

"Do you think it would be wise to separate?"

Thurston took the pencil and scrawled:

"No; we'll stick together. Ching-Lung will go first, as his eyes are so keen. We'll keep along the bottom."

Ching-Lung smiled again, and they set off briskly. They laboured after him, making good speed on the clean, firm sand. Great shadowy fish hovered round them like ghosts. Then a horrible shape stalked out of the glassy darkness, and barred the way—a giant octopus.

Thurston and the bo'sun halted instinctively, and drew back in fear and loathing. It was a monster, with tentacles ten feet long, and a snapping beak. It flung out its writhing arms, and Ching-Lung raised his axe. Rupert longed to drag him back as he rushed at the monster. One of the horrible arms shot out, and closed round the Chinese boy's waist.

Thurston and Maddock turned sick and giddy as they saw Ching-Lung whirled aloft. Horton dashed forward. The great arms tossed and waved, lashing up the sand, and hiding the fierce struggle. Then the water cleared. The octopus had vanished, defeated, into his retreat, leaving three severed tentacles behind him.

"Murder!" groaned the frightened bo'sun. "Why did I ever come? Why didn't they pick someone else?"

Rupert carried an electric gun, but the sudden apparition of the octopus had made him forget he was armed. Ching-Lung and Horton went on as if nothing had happened. The Chinese boy's suit was much too large for him, but it did not appear to hamper him at all. But they turned their lamps on the hill in vain. There was no cave or entrance of any kind.

Then Ching-Lung vanished.

Appalled, they halted. Ching-Lung had been barely ten paces in front of Horton. On the right lay the uncanny hill; on the left, before and behind, stretched the flat yellow sand. As they stood, petrified with amazement, a yellow human hand, waving a lamp, rose from the sand. Ching-Lung had fallen into a hole.

Their breath came back to them, and they gathered round to the rescue. But Ching-Lung needed no aid. He held his lantern low down, and the astonished men saw that he was standing upon a metal ladder that vanished down into the darkness. Without an instant's hesitation, Ching-Lung began to descend. The others followed, but they could not keep pace with the nimble Celestial.

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"THE SCHOOLBOY CASTAWAYS,"

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The light from his lamp grew dimmer and fainter. Thurston found it difficult to breathe as the pressure of the water increased. Where did this strange, uncanny well lead?

Suddenly Maddock's foot slipped, and he missed his hold. He did not fall swiftly, but his weight forced Rupert's clutch from the ladder, and he in turn dislodged the diver. They fell together, and lay in a heap. Horton was first upon his feet. The lamps showed a second ladder, slanting upwards, and near the top gleamed the light carried by Ching-Lung.

They pulled themselves together, and toiled on after the twinkling light, Rupert puzzling and pondering over the mystery. If Ferrers Lord had built these ladders, he had not only conquered the ocean depths, but depths below the ocean. The pressure decreased as they clambered up, and their breath came easily. Ching-Lung's light had disappeared. At last!

They were in the water no longer, but in air. Their heavy diving-dresses weighed them down. Ching-Lung seized Horton, and unscrewed the nozzle of his helmet. Horton did the same for Rupert, and then for Maddock.

"Dis a jolly funny place, peoples!" squeaked Ching-Lung. "He, he, he! Excusee me if I takee off my dancing-shooses!"

An ebony blackness surrounded them beyond the ring of light thrown by their lamps. Thurston's voice did not sound his own as he said:

"By Jove, this is an odd kind of adventure! I suppose we're under the hill. Hark! What's that?"

Out of the darkness came a hoarse, panting voice, like the breathing of some colossal beast. Pant, pant, pant! They stood nervously straining their ears.

"Dat's ole Davy Jones snoling," said Ching-Lung.

Horton laughed weakly at the sally, but the strain of the unknown was making him feel shaky. The weird noise ceased, and then came again, quivering and roaring through the gloom.

"Do you know," said Rupert, "I feel in a blue funk. I've half a mind to go back!"

"I'm with you," answered the diver frankly. "This is horrible!"

Maddock only groaned. He was white as a sheet.

"You peoples mighty brave!" squeaked Ching-Lung, as he unstrapped his leaden-soled boots. "You goes back if you likee, but notee me. When I gettee undressed, I goee for a little stroll. Me no comee so far to—"

A blended cry of amazement and wonder checked him. Suddenly a thousand dazzling lights flashed out, almost blinding them. Shading their eyes, they huddled together and stared around.

They were in a mighty cavern, whose domed roof rose high above them. Round the cavern rose a gallery, on which they stood, guarded by a stout rail of ornamental steel. Hundreds of glistening walrus-skulls were fastened to the rocky walls, an electric light showing at the tip of every tusk.

Below lay a lake, and from its centre rose a massive column. At the base of the column the water bubbled and boiled and hissed, and from the depths came the weird, panting noise.

A figure appeared at the opposite end of the gallery—a monstrous negro. He was dressed in a grey uniform, and carried a rifle on his shoulder. Two enormous wolfhounds followed at his heels as he advanced. He paused before Rupert, saluted, and said:

"The sign."

Rupert drew off the ring and handed it to the negro. The man bowed.

"You will follow me, please, gentlemen," he said. "The chief awaits you."

They helped each other to remove the cumbrous diving-dresses, the tall negro standing like a statue beside them. Suddenly a goggle-eyed, helmeted head appeared at the top of the ladder they had ascended. Rupert caught a glimpse of the diver's face through the glass, and ran to the newcomer with a cry of welcome.

"Ferrers Lord!" he shouted.

Horton unhelmeted the millionaire. Lord gave his wet hand lazily to Thurston.

"My dear fellow," said Ferrers Lord, without evincing any astonishment, "you have made confoundedly bad time. What have you been doing?"

"Engines broke down," answered Rupert curtly. "It was a bad breakdown, too."

"So I presume. Why, you are days late! I never expected to see you here. Give me a hand with these boots. Maddock. Bah! Luck is always against me! This unfortunate business will mean new plans. Come to the chief."

"The chief! Who is that? I thought you were chief here!"

The millionaire smiled and shook his head. Then he turned to the negro.

"Look after these men, Lentad, and treat them well. I will go to the chief myself."

With Thurston beside him, he turned along to the gallery, and paused before a massive door let into the rock. As he knocked, Rupert looked down, and saw a dozen seals splashing and tumbling in the lake below. The hoarse panting sounded still through the vaulted cavern.

"Come, Rupert," said the millionaire.

The massive door swung back upon its hinges.

"Enter!" cried a deep voice.

Ferrers Lord lifted the curtain, disclosing a lofty room. At a table in the centre sat an old man. His skin was dark and terribly wrinkled, and a silky beard, white as snow, fell far below his waist. His hair was long and white also. A girl knelt beside him, reading softly, in a strange tongue, from a leather-bound book. He raised his head, and Rupert saw that he was blind.

"Come, Majol," he said, in English, to the girl. "We have read enough. Close the book and go to your room. Who is the stranger you have with you, Ferrers Lord? I know by his step that he is young. Tell me, is he brave?"

"A lion, chief."

"Good, good!" said the old man. "Then he shall hear. What news do you bring?"

"Little chief, Russia, while pretending to aid the allies, is plotting for herself. She wants China. Scaroff is in these waters, and that means no good. It must be lion against bear. We must grapple with the bear, my father."

The old man looked up and stroked his beard.

"Yes, yes. But you are too impetuous my son. This young man, then, is your ally and your friend. You told me his name was Rupert Thurston. Is he worthy to have your confidence?"

"More than worthy, chief."

"Show him all, my son," he said, "and tell him all."

Ferrers Lord laid his finger on his lips, and beckoned to Rupert. Thurston followed him out into the gallery. The millionaire leant over the railing and lighted a cigar.

"This is a strange place, Rupert," he drawled—"the strangest place in the whole world. The man you have just seen is Ivan Scaroff, uncle of our friend Michael. Do not interrupt me while I tell you the story. Twenty years ago he was lord of the vast estates and wealth which Michael now holds. He was one of the greatest men in Russia—the cleverest, the most honourable. He chafed under the cruel tyranny of the Government, and longed to free the miserable serfs, for he had lived in England, where every man is free and equal. Consequently the Government hated and distrusted him."

He paused until the strange panting noise that had drowned his voice had died away.

"Michael was only twenty-one then, but he was greedy and shrewd. He plotted against his uncle—in fact, he headed a Government conspiracy against him. I need not go into details, but the base scheme succeeded. Forged proofs were brought forward, showing that Ivan and his only son were forming a plan to murder the Tsar. The son was executed; but, fearing an uproar—for the people worshipped him—Ivan was sent to Siberia for life. Two years ago he escaped into China and reached Peking. I met him there."

"The story of his terrible wrongs made me swear a vendetta against misgoverned Russia. He helped me with the plan of the Lord of the Deep. Without his aid I must have failed. The Russian Government fear his vengeance, and would pay a million pounds for his life. Even in China a dozen assassins attempted to kill him. He is safe here, and nowhere else. I never move a step without consulting him—his brain is so clear, and his knowledge so great. He is the head of the largest secret society in the world, and their aim is to put down oppression. In Russia also there are six million sworn members."

He flicked the ashes from his cigar. The weird pant, pant, rose hoarsely from the lake.

"What makes that noise?" asked Thurston. "It frightened me horribly at first."

The millionaire laughed, and pointed to the pillar in the centre of the lake.

"That is a hollow tube," he said, "built of steel. The depth of the water from the lake to the surface of the sea is ninety-seven fathoms. The tube provides our air-supply from the surface. You hear the noise of the air as it is pumped in."

"By Jove," said Rupert, "that's clever! But suppose a ship were to bump against your chimney?"

"The chance is remote, my dear fellow, and we have provided for it. We should not be drowned out like rats, as you suppose, for the shock would close a watertight door. We only take in air at night. Look."

He whistled to some unseen engineer. Without a sound, the great column collapsed, like a gigantic telescope, and sank into the lake.

"Marvellous!" muttered Rupert. "And how do you produce this lavish display of light?"

"By ordinary dynamos, worked by the same secret motive power I use on my submarine vessels. When experimenting

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with my diving-dress, I discovered this cavern. It was, of course, filled with water, which we pumped out. Come back with me to the chief, and take a glass of wine. I see our men are going fishing."

Michael Scaroff and Nathan Trethvick Plot Together— The Message in the Bottle.

"Bah," drawled Prince Michael Scaroff, "you are too fond of fairy-tales, Trethvick! Do not tell me such a thing. A cavern beneath the sea, where men may live and breathe! You've been reading the 'Arabian Nights,' or something of the kind."

The dwarf scowled as he refilled his glass. The two men were sitting in the saloon of the Tsaritsa.

"Banter and chaff as much as you like!" growled the dwarf sullenly. "Don't flatter yourself that I'm your dupe. Lord—hang him!—and I were mixed up in an affair once that would send him to gaol for life if I could prove it. I can't prove it now, for my father has lost the papers. I know you stole them and gave them to Ferrers Lord as the price of his silence about the liner you pirated. We'll let that pass now. I tell you plainly that Lord has a home under the sea, and, what's more, your uncle lives there."

Michael Scaroff paled, and half rose from his chair.

"Not Ivan Scaroff? You jest!"

"He, he, he!" tittered the dwarf. "I've touched you on a tender place, have I, my noble princeling? I have the proofs."

Scaroff held out a shaking hand.

"Give them to me."

Nathan Trethvick took out his tobacco-box. Carefully wrapped in tissue-paper was a piece of ordinary indiarubber and a tiny bottle of ink. He rubbed the damp cork over the rubber. Scaroff was still holding out his hand.

"There it is!" croaked the dwarf. "I got at the ring, melted this stuff, and took an impression."

He forced the inky rubber on Scaroff's white cuff. The message that had puzzled Thurston was printed there—the latitude and longitude, and the words: "Watch for the Crimson Hill—watch well. Show me. Enter." Scaroff knew the ring with the triangular facet, for he had seen it on Lord's finger. His handsome face flushed.

"I apologise, Trethvick," he said; "but still it is hard to believe."

"I'm no fool!" he growled. "When I was playing a double game with Ferrers Lord, I knew it would go hard with me if I were found out. He daren't shoot me, but he was certain to get rid of me. He pays well, but you pay better. I took good care to make the most of my time. I've got the secret of that diving-suit of his, and I know he means to visit the cavern on the seventeenth. You have skilled workmen on board who can easily convert your old-fashioned diving-helmets into the proper sort. I'll tell you my plan. Lord never misses an appointment. He'll go to his cavern to-morrow. We can run the distance in the time, creep up with masked lights, and mine the place."

Scaroff pulled at his moustache.

"An excellent idea," he answered, "but risky!"

The dwarf spat into the stove.

"Are you afraid?"

"Of Ferrers Lord? I certainly am."

"Then we need take no risks. We can lie off a mile and send two of the men to do it. If they get blown up, too, what matters? If Lord once gets mixed up with the Chinese affairs, we are ruined."

There was a tap at the door, and a Mongolian entered and muttered a few words.

"What does the brute say?" growled Trethvick.

"He says we have reached the spot where Rogers promised to communicate with us. That castaway trick worked like a charm. I have had four messages from him already, but he has not managed to cut Ching-Lung's throat yet. Will you come on deck?"

The engines were stopped, and the vessel rose to the surface. When they reached the deck, four rowing-boats were softly lowered. In the bow of each stood a man with a night-glass. The boats pulled away in opposite directions. Scaroff yawned.

"Thunder," croaked the dwarf, "you speak like a fool! You know he is alive, and you know your spies have searched the world for him. Lord had a book in his safe, and I—he, he, he!—had a duplicate key. In the book was an account of what Ivan Scaroff had done towards making his submarine retreat habitable, with plans. There was also something about a new explosive, and—"

A shrill whistle sounded across the water.

"The message is found!" cried the Russian.

The other boats heard the signal, and came pulling back. The message was in a light steel bottle, with a light attached to the neck. A man carried it on board in his arms.

"That fellow Rogers is a treasure," said the Russian. "I do not know where he gets these things from without being detected, or how he gets them afloat. He has a little battery here, with an electric lamp to burn eight hours, and a clockwork arrangement which turns on the switch an hour or so after the bottle is launched. Now to see what it contains."

He unscrewed the brass stopper and shook out a roll of waterproof silk. Within it was a scrap of paper. He laughed aloud as he glanced at it, and then handed it to the dwarf. Trethvick read:

"If you find this in time, your chance has come. All here know that we are in search of a mysterious place whose latitude and longitude I give. It is supposed to be a submarine cave. If we stay there, come as near as you can. If the saloon shutters are open it will mean that Thurston and Horton have left the ship. It will be easy to waylay them. Do not forget your pledge not to attack the vessel while I am here.—M.R."

"Poor deluded fool!" he said, with a laugh. "If I had a chance to torpedo the Lord of the Deep, I would do so if my father were aboard!"

Trethvick rubbed his ugly hands gleefully.

"He, he, he!" he croaked. "That's the way to talk!"

The Spy.

The Lord of the Deep lay at rest on her bed of soft white sand. Hours had passed since Rupert, Horton, Maddock, and Ching-Lung had left the ship. Tom Prout, in all the pride of his temporary command, was not feeling anxious, but decidedly hungry. He stood in the conning-tower, pipe in mouth. The great goggle eyes from the Crimson Hill glared at him steadily.

"My word," he thought, as his hunger increased, "how I could polish off a pound of good steak with fried 'taters and onions!"

Someone climbed the ladder and entered the conning-tower. It was Martin Rogers, the madman.

"Hallo, barmy!" roared the steersman pleasantly. "Been writing to the Duke of Whitechapel lately?"

A strange gleam came into the castaway's hollow eyes. He burst into a laugh.

"Ho, ho! The Boy of Algiers dropped me a postcard this morning."

"Did he now?" said Tom Prout. "What did he want?"

"Well, he said the queen's pugdog kept him awake at night, barking at the moon, and gave the Prime Minister's wife headache. He asked me what I should advise him to do under the circumstances."

"And I expect you told him to poison the dog?" said the steersman. "Very good advice, too!"

"Ho, ho, ho! I didn't!" The maniac bent forward and whispered in Prout's ear. "I couldn't do that. It was a pugdog, you see, and you can't poison 'em unless you give 'em the poison in a thunderstorm on Christmas Day out of a silver spoon dipped in glue. Ho, ho, ho! I had a better plan than that. I told him to turn off the moon at the meter. He barked at the moon, you see. Would you mind stopping at the next post-office, and I'll send the old man a wire? It feels like snow, doesn't it?"

The lean, sunken-jawed maniac leant against the wheel and fixed his glowing eyes upon the lamps of the Crimson Hill. Little did Tom Prout think that under his clever mask of madness Martin Rogers, the pretended castaway, was a spy and a hireling of Michael Scaroff.

"Poor beggar!" he thought. "He's getting worse instead of better. I can't think why Ching-Lung hates him so."

Uttering another laugh, the traitor slunk away, and went singing along the corridor. Even though honest Tom Prout had been the victim of more than one of Ching-Lung's practical jokes, he could not help liking the Chinese boy. Suddenly the words Ching-Lung had whispered in his ear just before leaving the ship came back to him. He repeated them softly in the Celestial's pigeon English:

"You keepee you eye on dat lunatic chapee, Thomas. He no good at allee. You watchee him, and no folgetee. He a bad onee."

Tom Prout went to the head of the companion, and roared:

"Jooy!"

A sailer came hurrying up.

"Keep a look-out here, Joseph," said the steersman, "and if that Rogers comes loafing round, order him out. I'm just going down to Bovril for some grub. I'm ravenous."

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"Ay, ay, my boy!" said Joe, biting off a good three inches of plug from a black cake—Joe had the biggest mouth in the ship. "I'll see to it. And if you could bone a bit o' grub out o' the Freneh for me, I'd not shy it at yer, you bet."

Monsieur Pierre was in a bad temper, as his supply of moustache-pomade had run out.

"Vat you vant?" he inquired.

"A bit o' grub, Bovril," answered the steersman—"a piece of steak, now, or a mutton—"

"Go to Hanovaire!" screamed the cook. "You aire a glutton! You haf your meal wis ze r-rest, and yet you not satisfy. You get nuzzing here but ze—ze sack. Go away, zen, out of zis galley!"

The steersman looked savage at the rebuff. Something was simmering in the big oven, and diffusing a grateful odour around. Prout licked his lips greedily and opened the door. It was a roast duck, done to a turn.

"How dare you tampaire wis my business?" shrieked Monsieur Pierre, swelling with rage. "How dare you open my oven door? Sacre! I am insult! I am outrage in my own galley! I vill r-revenge my honour-r! I vill haf blood!"

"I guess you will," said Prout, with a grin. "when you kill another pig. But no more chaff, Pierre. Do be a pal, and give me something to eat. I'll fight a duel with you after with toy pistols, if you like."

Monsieur Pierre clutched his oily locks and hopped up and down frenziedly. The thought of having to do without his beloved pomade had rankled in his heart all day, and made him as touchy as gunpowder.

Prout couldn't resist the luscious aroma that rose from the duck. He opened the oven door again, and hungrily sniffed up the rich steam. It was the last straw.

"Gif you sumzing?" yelled the cook. "You interlopaire, you impudent, you farhead! Ah, oui, I gif you sumzing at vonce, immediate, forthwith—so!"

It was a flour-bag containing a quantity of flour. It was an upward blow, for monsieur was not tall, and the bag wrapped round the steersman's head and burst at one corner. The cook tugged with all his strength to free his weapon, but instead he dragged Prout down with a crash on top of him. For a moment the air was full of flour and strong language. Then Prout rose to his feet as white as a snowman; and stirred up the wailing Frenchman with his toe.

"Had enough?"

"Ah, I am dead!" wailed Monsieur Pierre. "Ze life is crush from me. I am flatten, I am squash! Sweep up ze pieces!"

"You get on your pins," roared the steersman, dashing the flour out of his eyes, "and got me a drink!"

Trembling and moaning, the cook obeyed. He went to a little cupboard and drained the contents of a bottle of rum into a glass. This was not much, so he blindly seized a second bottle to make up a stiff dram.

"Now, you just come here!" roared Prout. "If you even wriggle, I'll twist your head off, d'ye hear?"

It was in vain that the chef went down on his hands and knees weeping and begging for mercy. The steersman's flinty heart could not be softened. He pulled the flour-bag over the miserable Frenchman's head, shoulders, and arms, and placed his victim in a corner.

"Now, you just listen to me, Bovril," said Prout. "You have struck your superior officer, which is a horful crime. I knows a chap once who got boiled in hoil for doin' it. I'm goin' to have a little feed. You stand where you are, and keep sayin' 'Please, Mr. Prout, I'm sorry, sir. Please, Mr. Prout, I'm a pig, sir!' as fast as you can. The fust time I hear you stop I'll shy a kettle at you, if you stop twice you'll get the biggest pot in the galley at your head, and if you're fool enough to stop again, I'll biff you with the blessed stove! Go ahead!"

With a self-satisfied chuckle, Prout took the juicy duck from the oven, cut a great slice of bread, and set to work to enjoy himself, while the unhappy Frenchman gabbled away for dear life in muffled tones:

"Please, Mistaire Prout, I am very sorry, saire! Please, Mistaire Prout, I am a pig, saire!"

The duck was delicious—so delicious that the steersman was so occupied in picking its bones that he quite forgot to taste the rum. He paused once to hurl a drumstick at the chef.

"You're stopping!" he roared.

"Oh, no, I am not, saire!" wailed monsieur's tearful voice. And then he went at it again harder than ever, and managed to get the apology terribly mixed. He was now jabbering:

"Please, Mr. Prout, you aire a very sorry pig, saire! Please, Mr. Pig, you aire a Prout, saire! Please, Mr. Sorry,

we aire pig very, saire! Please, pig, I am Prout Mistaire, saire!"

At last all that remained of the duck was a framework, and with a sigh of deep satisfaction Prout wiped his mouth and gulped down the rum.

It had a strange pungent taste, and burned his throat. As he stood up the stove began to dance about in an odd sort of fashion, and he noticed, to his amazement, that Pierre, enveloped in the white bag, was standing on his head.

The cook, in his haste, had made a mistake. The second bottle did not contain rum. Prout was drugged.

"Well, I'm blesh!" he said, looking blankly at the strange vision. "Never knew y' wash an acrobash afore. Thatsh goo-ver' goo! Brayvosh! Hip-p-pooray! Blesh me life, theresh two of 'em nowsh! Goo'-bye!"

The steersman went reeling and staggering down the corridor. In a dazed, maudlin kind of way he wondered where he was and what had happened. The truth was that monsieur had poured some powerful flavouring essence into the glass, and the poisonous mixture had acted at once.

Prout's legs began to fail him just as he reached the door of the saloon. His head swam, and his eyes refused to keep open. He staggered against the door, reeled across the saloon, and fell upon the table. He lay there, hidden by

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the window-shutter. The shutter rose noiselessly. Rogers tilted back the shade, and holding the lamp before him, concealed the light with his cap.

"Thunder!" thought the dreamer. "He's signalling!"

The light shone out, disappeared, and shone out again. The sleeper awoke. It was no dream, but reality.

"You spy!" roared Tom Prout.

Rogers turned with a terrified scream; the lamp fell, and was broken. Down hurtled the steersman's iron fist like a mallet-blow, and the cas away lay unconscious at his feet. Ching Lung had judged well.

How Prout Flashed the Signal in Time—Two Long Shots—
A Fleet of Torpedoes—The Traitor Meets a Just Doom.

For nearly two hours Ivan Searoff, Thurston, and Ferrers Lord talked together. The blind Russian spoke of the Government with a bitter hatred. Rupert's blood grew chill as he related the gruesome horrors of Siberia. As he listened,

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THE EDITOR.

the long velvet cloth, and was sound asleep in a moment. The door swung back.

And Tom Prout had a strange dream. He fancied that Mr. Thurston had summoned him into the saloon to congratulate him upon the way he had performed his varied duties. Then Mr. Thurston suddenly vanished, and Ching-Lung appeared, looking pale and weak. He warned the steersman to watch Martin Rogers. Then, in turn, the Chinese boy seemed to melt away, and a third figure took his place.

It was the lean, cadaverous figure of the castaway. He came in like a ghost, walking silently, and peering about him with his strange, sunken eyes. Prout dreamed that he sat still in his chair, and he wondered why the madman, who looked him squarely in the face, did not speak.

Like a snake or a ferret Martin Rogers crawled to the safe. It seemed to open at his touch. For a time only his back was visible, but there was a rustling of papers. He thrust an envelope in his pocket, and his eyes sparkled with a look of evil triumph as he turned.

A movable electric reading-lamp with a long cord stood on the table. The madman lifted it and touched the spring of

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he grew to hate the country, too, where such hideous wrongs cried aloud for vengeance.

"Bah!" said Ferrers Lord, as the old man paused. "You make our flesh creep. Personally, the wrongs of the Russian people, who are trampled like dust under the heel of the Government, matters little to me. In the last ten years Russia has doubled her power in the East. She must be crushed before she lays her claws on China. As a Briton my duty lies towards my country. Britain must rule China—if she has to battle with the whole world to win it."

The blind man stroked his beard.

"Then let her have it," he said. "I wish no better. Where her flag flies the slave is free. Good-night, my son!"

"Good-night, Chief! Work hard at the new explosive."

They went out. Ben Maddock was too ill to put on his diving-suit, but Ching Lung, with his tough muscles and iron constitution, showed no traces of having been half-strangled and drowned. They found him perched on the railing of the gallery like a bird on a branch, performing juggling tricks for the benefit of the amazed negro.

"Come, Ching," said Rupert, "we are going back to the ship."

NEXT TUESDAY: "BULSTRODE ON THE WARPATH." A Splendid, Long, Complete Tale of the Chums of Greyfriars. By FRANK RICHARDS.

"Velly good, sil. Me quite leady. Mr. Holton almooes dlesed."

They helped each other into the suits and left the wonderful cavern. Ferrers Lord took the lead, and Ching-Lung came next, carrying the electric gun. Lord did not waste time descending the ladder. He stepped from the topmost rung, hung for a second from an iron bar that was placed there for the purpose, and then let go. He sank rapidly, and after counting ten, according to instructions, Ching-Lung followed.

The descent was accomplished in safety, and the laborious ascent began. Horton, who was the heaviest, lagged behind a little. They gained the top at last, and stepped out upon the yellow carpet of sand. A brilliant flash of light shot through the glassy waters, then the light began to twinkle and dance. Ferrers Lord tore the slate from Rupert's belt.

Twinkle—flash—flash! Flash—flash!

It was a message from the Lord of the Deep. The millionaire read the code as quickly as another man could read ordinary print. He scrawled down the startling message:

"Keep a sharp look-out. Caught Rogers red-handed signalling from saloon. Foes are near. Torpedo nets down, and every precaution taken. Rogers a spy. Answer."

Ferrers Lord raised his lamp and waved it sharply. The flickering ceased, and one long flash signalled:

"I understand."

The millionaire rubbed his hand over the slate and erased what he had written. Then he raised his lamp again. Two powerful beams of light cut through the water and moved slowly along the crest of the Crimson Hill. Suddenly one of them halted. In the centre of the white ring stood a dark form—a diver.

Both Horton and Rupert could take down a message and translate it by the aid of the code signal-book, but they were not skilful enough to read it at sight. They did not know what had happened until the millionaire spun around.

Blinded by the flashing beam of light, the unknown diver stood still. He did not see his foes. Ferrers Lord knelt on one knee and raised the deadly gun. They saw the man fling up his arms and then sink slowly backwards. Then the millionaire dashed forward again, waving his lamp.

In the conning-tower of the Lord of the Deep Prout was watching the signal. He bellowed out an order to the man at the wheel, and then rushed to the speaking-tube. Rupert was struggling desperately at the millionaire's heels to fight his way up through the masses of weed.

Suddenly a dark, shadowy something halted above them. Lord held up his lamp, and made a quick gesture. The light flickered on a mass of torpedo-netting, and Rupert understood. He thrust his fingers through the meshes, and the vessel rose, lifting the four men with it. It cleared the hill-top and slowly sank, until their feet touched the sand on the opposite side. Then the searchlight flashed out again.

Thurston caught the millionaire's arm, and pointed along the beam of light. A second diver was revealed, running laboriously across the sand. Ferrers Lord raised the deadly tube, and the man spun over sideways, and sank down upon his face. Lord's face blanched.

A black, moving speck suddenly appeared in the light, travelling swiftly. It grew in size as it advanced. It was a torpedo. All saw it, and scattered like sheep before the deadly thing, throwing themselves flat in the sand. Straight and true it rushed forward, passed over them, and struck the Lord of the Deep amidships.

Its pointed nose dashed between the meshes of the net, and the torpedo stuck there, lashing its vicious screw in vain. Lord went forward and freed it. It was dragging him from his feet until Ching-Lung went to his aid. Between them they turned it, and sent it racing back in the direction of the hidden foe.

Rupert pointed forward again, and his shrill cry was drowned by the helmet. It was not one moving speck now, but a hundred—a veritable fleet of torpedoes. Prout saw them, too, and the water came gushing from the tanks. The Lord of the Deep leapt upwards out of danger, and all was dark save the feeble light of the lamps the four men carried.

Every man realised the terrible danger. In the grim, black, horrible darkness they could see the machines laden with death that were dashing swiftly towards them. If the torpedo they had sent back collided with one moving in the opposite direction they were as good as dead. By a strange instinct all scrambled towards the hill and burrowed into the thick weed.

One of the deadly engines grazed Rupert's shoulder. They waited, panting, and the moments dragged on. A few of the torpedoes passed over the crest of the mound, but the dense weed-growth, like some huge cushion, stopped the rest and clogged the propellers.

Ferrers Lord rose at last, and, masking his lamp, struggled up the hill. He had marked the spot where the first diver stood. The light showed him the dead man lying upon his back.

A heavy, lead-weighted spade and a ponderous rock-drill were close at hand. The body lay beside a heap of weeds. The man had cleared away the weeds, baring the solid rock. A hole had already been bored to receive a dynamite cartridge over the diver's shoulder.

Ferrers Lord flashed the light through the glass of the helmet.

"I thought so," he muttered, as he looked at the flat, yellow face. "Scaroff is far too careful of himself to risk his skin."

One by one the others joined him. The Lord of the Deep had sunk again, and was signalling for orders under the shelter of the hill. The millionaire signified that they were coming on board.

A quarter of an hour brought them to the ship. When their helmets were removed both Rupert and Ned Horton looked white. A couple of glasses of brandy revived them.

Thurston hurried to the saloon the moment he had changed his clothes. Ferrers Lord, dressed in a serge yachting suit, was lounging in an easy chair smoking a cigar.

"This is a pretty business," he said. "Where did you pick up this pretended madman?"

Rupert told the story of the derelict raft, and the millionaire laughed.

"Scaroff has excelled himself, Rupert. He must have watched you closely. It is clear this spy of his damaged the engines. It puzzles me that he did not attack you when you were crippled."

"But he must have killed Rogers if he torpedoed us."

"He would murder his mother, my dear fellow," said Ferrers Lord, "if it would benefit him. Possibly he had

a breakdown of his own some time. I came on my new boat, Destroyer, and, feeling rather doubtful about you, I have sent her on to watch for Scaroff. She will be back at midnight, when I must leave you. On the whole," he added drily, "I cannot congratulate you."

"We did our best," Thurston answered.

"In a way, certainly. That fellow Prout has done well. Make him third officer, and fetch Maddock back at dawn."

Rupert started to his feet as a quick report echoed through the ship.

"What is that?" he cried.

Ferrers Lord examined his cigar, and tore off a piece of broken tobacco-leaf.

"Oh," he answered, with a lazy yawn, "I presume they have just shot your friend the madman! You had better beware of cast-aways for the future, my dear boy. Let us have a game of billiards."

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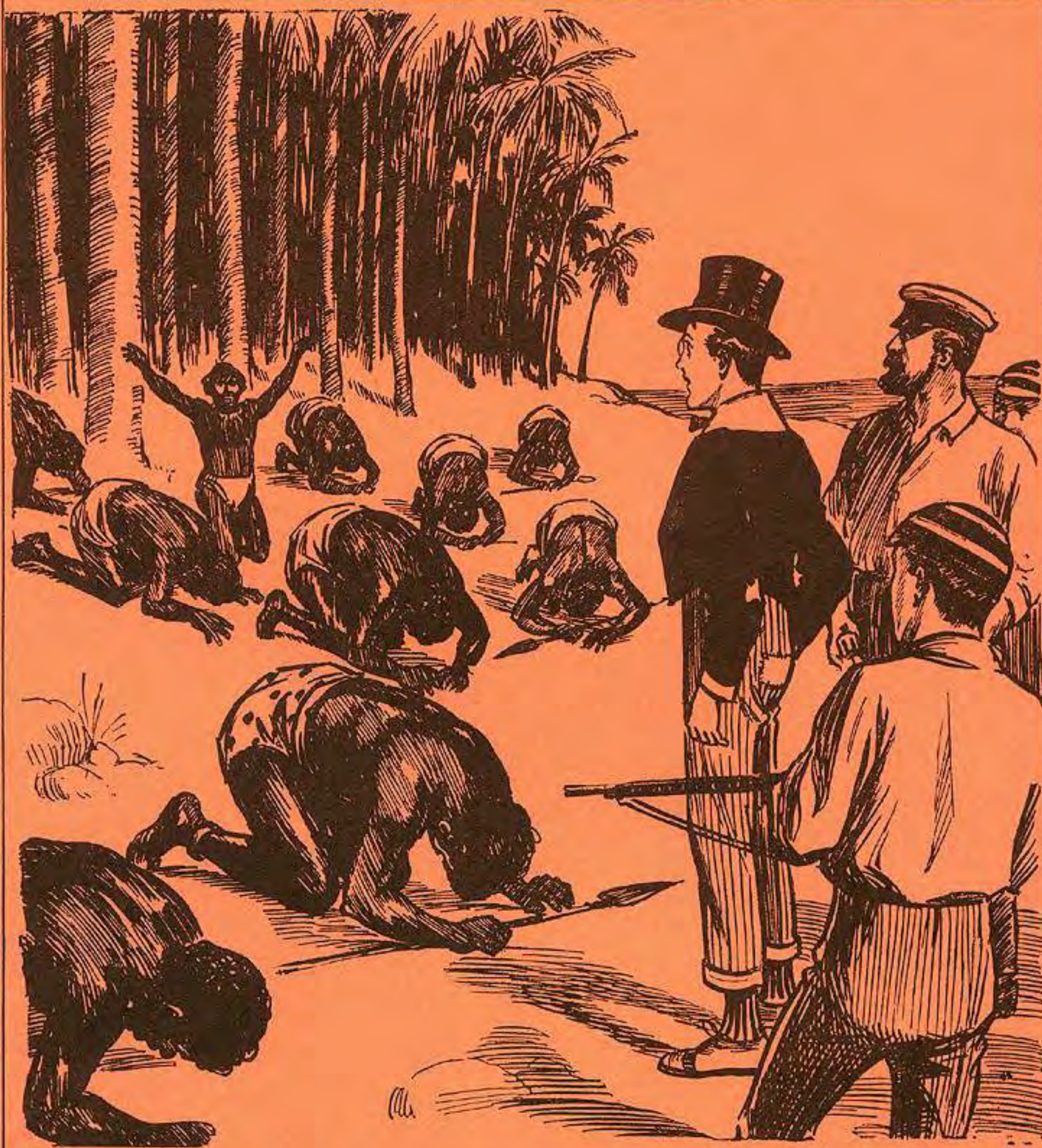
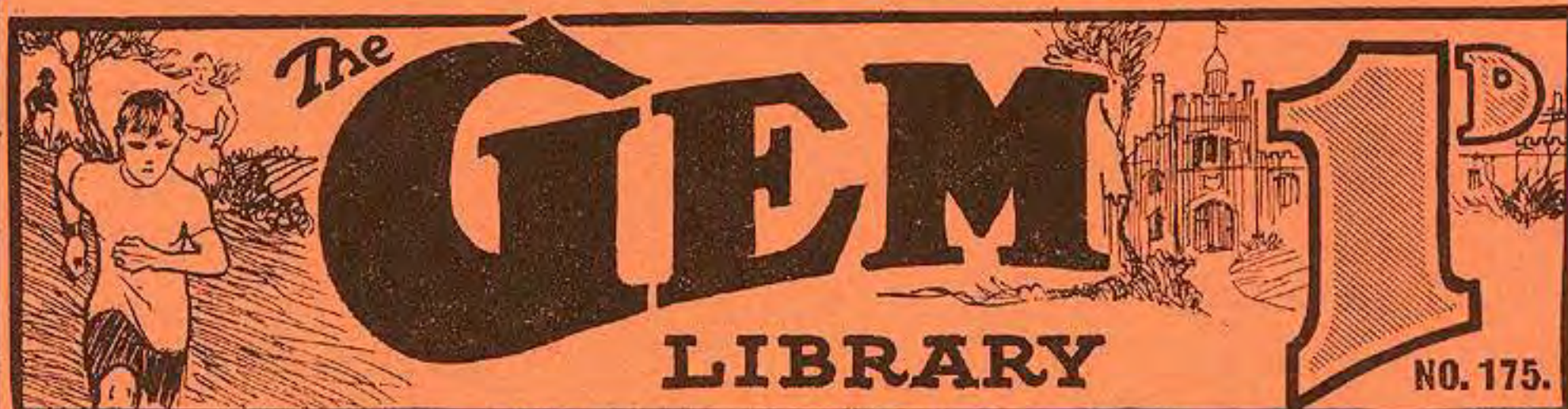


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